

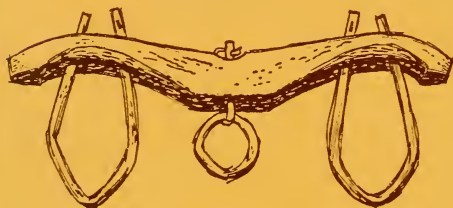


LINCOLN AT WORK

WILLIAM O. STODDARD

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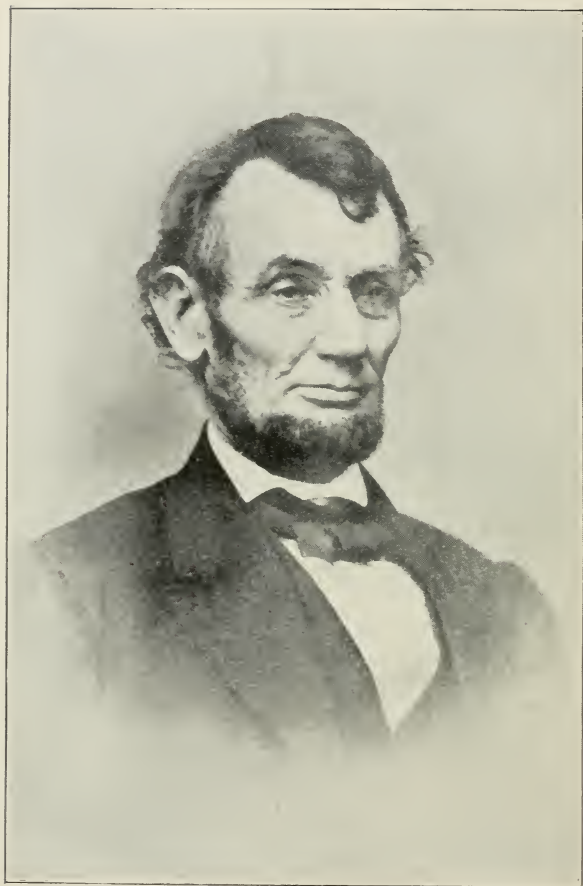
founded by

HARLAN HOYT HORNER

and

HENRIETTA CALHOUN HORNER

LINCOLN AT WORK



ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Engraved from the rare print referred to on page 43.

Lincoln at Work

Sketches from Life

BY

WILLIAM O. STODDARD

Illustrated by Sears Gallagher



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Boston and Chicago

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LINCOLN

Room

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Preface.

OME time after the sketches of which this volume is composed began to make their appearance in *The Christian Endeavor World*, an intelligent woman inquired of the author:—

“Please tell me, did Mr. Lincoln seem a great man to those who were most intimately associated with him in every-day life? Or was he only great at a distance, or in retrospect? Did he seem great to you, as you met him daily at the White House?”

“As to that, madam,” I replied, “I discovered, in after years, that I had seen and studied his greatness much more fully, perhaps more critically, than I was then aware. One strong impression was left upon my mind indelibly. I saw him on various occasions, under varied circumstances, surrounded by or in conference with the foremost men of his day. Among them were his cabinet officers, Senators, Congressmen, jurists, governors of States, scholars, literary men, military and naval celebrities, foreign ambassadors. Of many of these men

I had myself formed previously even exaggerated estimates. I took note, however, of one inevitable, unfailing phenomenon. Every man of them seemed suddenly to diminish in size the moment he in any manner came into comparison with Mr. Lincoln. Another curious thing was that all the really ablest men among them were aware, consciously or unconsciously, of the superior strength confronting them. Of course there were those who consented to say and even to record that they considered him defective, if not weak. They believed that they had read him, measured him; they regretted that the affairs of the nation were not in more capable hands,—their own, for instance.”

“There,” she exclaimed, “I am glad to hear you say so. I wonder if I should know a great man if I happened to meet one.”

“It is not likely that you would,” I told her. “Not unless you saw him actually doing something that nobody else could do. You would perceive his greatness then, if you saw him at work ——”

“That’s it,” she said. “Mr. Stoddard, I’d like to see Abraham Lincoln at his work!”

WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

Madison, N. J., May 16, 1900.



A Country Politician



“**T**HAT whole job pried? The careless young imp! What on earth made him meddle with it? And here I am, with a column leader to write, and all the news to make up!”

“It can’t be helped, now, and we want to get to press early to-morrow. Big edition. It’s pried awful!”

The young printer who was looking at the wreck of types with such an air of dismay was evidently the editor also of the weekly journal which he was preparing for the press. He was of medium height, with dark hair and a pair of saucy eyes. He stepped around, moreover, with the somewhat jaunty, half-defiant air which was likely, perhaps, to distinguish a far-Western journalist with local disturbances close at hand.

It was a hot June day, and he was in his shirt and trousers. His shirt-sleeves were rolled up to the shoulder, and his hands were black with printer’s ink.

The printing-office was in the second story of a large frame building that shook timor-

ously whenever the press was running or a good breeze blowing. Below, in front, was a flourishing dry-goods concern. In the rear of this was the editorial sanctum, and this also served for the office of a physician who was a principal owner of the journal.

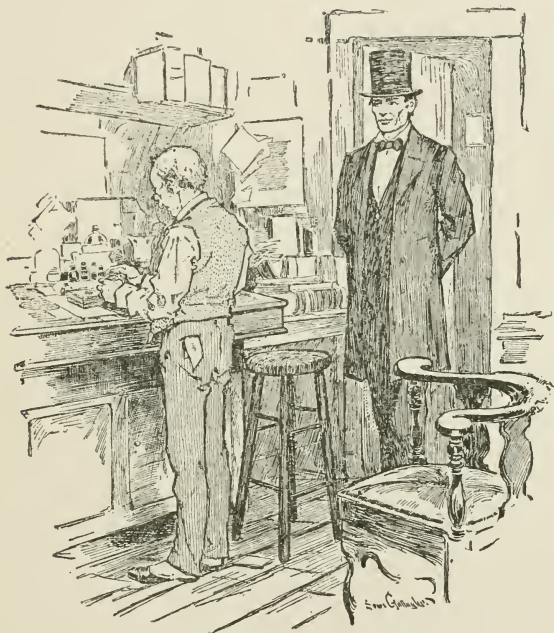
This gentleman was now standing at his desk, apparently occupied in the manufacture of pills. Short, thin, wiry, with a pugilistic expression of face, he had persisted in wearing, even in summer, a gorgeously flowered plush waistcoat.

Somebody came in at the wide-open door at this moment, almost filling it, he was so very tall. He was a powerful-looking, sallow-faced, clean-shaven man of middle age. He wore a high silk hat, somewhat foxy, and an elderly black suit.

"How are you to-day, Doc?" he inquired, but he could hardly have heard the medical man's soliloquy over his pills.

"Humph! What on earth is he here for? He isn't enough of an Abolitionist to suit me. He's at work on this 'ere new party, but he can't make it go. 'Tisn't in him! How are you?" he nevertheless responded aloud, as he turned to shake hands with his tall visitor. "Sit down. Cool off. Awful hot day. How are politics?"

The newcomer's hat was off, and he took a chair, mopping his broad, deeply wrinkled forehead with a red bandanna handkerchief.



"HOW ARE YOU TO-DAY, DOC?"

"Well, Doc, I'd say that American politics need a heap of doctoring, just now. I want to see that young man of the *Gazette*. They tell me that he knows about everybody in the

county. I want to know how things are running. Can you fetch him? If you can, bring him out."

"He's up-stairs, now," replied the doctor. "He's as busy as a bee, though. What do you want to know?"

"Well, I'd kind o' like to have a talk with him. Call him down, Doc?"

"Ye—es," drawled the doctor. "He can come, if you really want to see him. Speaking of politics, though, I want to say one thing 'bout myself, right here. I'm not any sort of half-way man. I'm an out-and-out Abolitionist."

The tall man laughed, in a quiet, peculiar way. He seemed to be amused, but the doctor was not, and he went up the stairs with the air of a man who was not well pleased with his errand.

"I say!" he blurted, as he reached the upper floor. "Come down. The old man is here and wants to see ye. You'd best come, but you can't make anything out of him. I s'pose you know 'bout what he is. He was in Congress once ——"

"Hang it!" responded the irritated man at the pied job. "I can't leave this. I haven't a minute to spare."

"Come along!" urged his friend. "You

are looking like sin! Can't you brush up a little? Put on your coat."

"No, I won't. Not for him or anybody else. Not this hot day. I'll come as I am, or I won't come at all. What do you suppose he'll care how I look?"

"Why, man alive, you're all ink. Some on your face, where you wiped it. No collar on. Worst-looking critter——"

"Tell you what, then, Doctor," said the editor, "I'll compromise. I'll wash my hands, but I won't roll down my shirt-sleeves. Tell him I'm coming."

There was a musical chuckle near the desk in the room below, for the conversation upstairs had not been carried on in a whisper.

Down came the doctor to report, and to put pills into little boxes, and to measure powders with a horn spoon, and his tall visitor chatted away with him pleasantly.

The printer left his job rebelliously, and scrubbed at his ink-stains as if he loved them and preferred having them where they were. Sharp rubbing with a crash towel followed, and his toilet was completed. Nevertheless, there was a half-bashful flush upon his face when he came down into the sanctum, for the gentleman he was to meet was really a man of some distinction,—that is, in his own State,

but not outside of it. He was considered a good lawyer, and had been active as a political manager. It was generally understood, just at this time, however, that he had utterly ruined his political career, for the future, by the extraordinary, half-crazy blunders which he had recently been making.

"How are you?" he said to the young man, somewhat as if he had known him from childhood. "I won't bother you long, but you can tell me a few little things that I want to know. You keep track of the drift of the county politics, and you can say how the people are going."

"No—o," put in the young editor. "They're not going, just now. Half of 'em don't know where they are, and the other half are nailed down to their old notions."

"Just so!" exclaimed the visitor. "It's just so everywhere else. Now I want to take this county up by the townships, one by one. How, for example, is Lost Grove township?"

"That? Why, that's old Mack's. Only two newspapers taken there. Only four men and an old woman that can read even them. He owns the distillery. The voters get their tickets from him every time. He's quarrelling with the pro-slavery men, though, about his hiring some free niggers. If he should make

up his mind to hire two or three more, you can count on that township, solid, for this once."

"Just so," laughed the visitor. "And now, how about Turney's and all along the South Fork?"

"O! The Egyptians! They're all voting for General Jackson yet."

"They haven't heard that he's dead?" slowly drawled the tall politician. "That's the trouble with a good many people. But they're all going to be waked up pretty soon. And now how about ——" So he went carefully on, exhibiting a minuteness of local knowledge of persons and things that was remarkable. From townships he came down to villages, to hamlets, to individual men and their antecedents, as if at some previous time he had compiled a directory of all that region.

The young editor was now sitting with his bare elbows resting upon the doctor's table, gazing absorbedly into the deeply marked, unhandsome, but wonderfully intelligent, face of the man before him.

The doctor? O! They had both forgotten him. No sooner had this pair entered upon their uninteresting cross-examination than he had picked up his leather medicine-case and walked out in silence. The tall politician must

also have almost forgotten the young editor himself, for he shortly talked on as if half soliloquizing. He seemed to be employing the statistics of that county as a sample study for the understanding of the condition of scores of others, and of the State, and of other States, and of the whole country. He even picked up a pencil and jotted down the figures of rough estimates, his readings of political possibilities.

The pried job lay deserted upon the imposing stone, up-stairs, while the Western country politician was in this manner wasting his own time and that of the absorbed young printer. The typesetters would soon be calling for copy, and the proposed "leader" was yet unwritten.

The day was drifting on toward noon, when the visitor at last arose, and he shook hands heartily as he said to his new adherent: "Thank you. I'll see you again some day. Stump your district. Do all you can for good organization. We shall win yet. You may be sure of that. Such a cause as ours cannot fail."

"I believe that!" almost shouted the young man. "But, Mr. Lincoln, it's an awful up-hill tramp, just now."

"The top o' the hill is nearer to climb than some folks think it is."

Out he went, and the printer was about to

ascend the stairs when the doctor stepped in through a door from the dry-goods store.

"Hollo!" he inquired. "Is Old Abe gone? I reckon you did n't manage to make much out of him. He's kind o' played out, he is. We've got to look round for somebody else to take the lead o' things."

The editor shook his head, and went up without replying, for he was still under the tremendous fascination of the tall man's personality. He walked slowly to the pied job, and began to finger it.

"So," he muttered, "that's Old Abe. I've heard a great deal about him, but I never saw him before. I reckon I want to see him again. He seems to know exactly what all our people are made of, man by man. I'm glad I've had a talk with Abraham Lincoln."



A TRIAL BY SPADE



HE'S going to be hung!"

"Well, he ought to be. He killed him."

"What on earth did he kill him for, right there in the store?"

"He wanted his money. You see, the fellow was there to buy cattle. He had lots of cash with him. It was the easiest thing in the world to knock him down with a spade, gather the money, jump on a horse that was ready, and ride away."

"But they caught him."

"That was his blunder. More men at hand than he counted on. They had pluck, too, and they grappled him. Two of 'em were powerful strong men. Now he's going to suffer for it. Going to 'tend the trial?"

"Of course I am. I wouldn't miss it for anything. Who's to defend him?"

"Nobody, as yet. They'll 'point some lawyer or other, for form's sake. That is, if he isn't lynched first. There's right smart o' talk, among the neighbors, of stringing him right up."

Everybody else was talking about it in just that way, and I kept my word about going down by rail to see how that trial would turn out. I had never seen a murder trial in all my life, and I wanted to know how it was done, especially in a clear case like this.

There was a crowd in the county town, just as I knew there would be.

There were nearly as many women as men, and some of them brought their knitting. Quite a number were of the new kind of people from the Eastern States, but most were old settlers that knew each other at sight. The new people and the old sort could be told apart by once looking at them. Every soul, anyhow, seemed to know all about the murder, and they were more than ready to tell what they knew. Not any of them had seen the murderer yet, but nobody had any pity for him. It was so awfully wicked a thing for him to do.

It was away down in middle Illinois, and it is pretty hot there, sometimes, in summer. It was hot that day, and the crowd looked red-faced and wilted. I heard one man say that as for him, if he was that convict, he'd rather be shot at once than to have to wait, and know all the while that the rope was getting ready, and to have to face the judge and the jury,

and his fellow citizens, and to hear the evidence closing in on him.

The courtroom was a big one, all dingy and whittled up, and the windows were all open to let in what air there was. Every square foot of room for sitting and standing was occupied early. They took the prisoner in at the back door; and then there was a buzz, everybody trying to get a look at him. The women all told each other what they thought about his ferocious face.

He was a very short, stocky, common-looking man, and his face was quite ugly, as if he felt savage and rebellious instead of being meekly resigned to receive the just reward of his crime. That told against him right away. He was hardened, and the women in particular had expected him to show some signs of repentance. So they took off their hats and bonnets, and squared themselves to what was coming. Not more than a dozen of the men in that room, except the lawyers, had their coats on. Some few of their shirts were kind of white, but more were homespun hickory or red flannel.

The judge was behind his desk by this time. He was a large, heavy man, with bushy eyebrows, and he was hard and stern in the face, like a ready-made sentence of death. The

district attorney was a prime good lawyer. He was a little pale and nervous just now, as any fellow ought to be when he knows that his next official duty is practically to kill a human being. He had other good counsel to help him do his job, though. They had volunteered for public spirit.

The murderer sat down in his place with the shadows of death settling around him and with hundreds of pairs of eyes staring at him. His counsel sat near him. He had only one, a man from away up the State, who had offered to come down and defend him without pay. That was right, and a good thing for him to do. It would make the trial go off regularly, and nobody could complain. It was only fair to the murderer to give him all his lawful chances, although, as everybody knew, he had not any.

He was one of the tallest men you ever saw, that lawyer. He was dressed in a thin black suit that was not new by any means, and he was clean-shaved. The men that watched him closest were the jury; but he hardly seemed to look at them, and it made some of them sit around uneasy. Men in a jury-box always like to be treated with some consideration by counsel on either side of the case. This lawyer laughed, too, once or twice, and the

whole crowd felt angry when they saw him do that, at so solemn a time, with his own client about to be sentenced to be hanged by the neck until he was dead.

The preliminaries were all cut short by the judge, and then the witnesses were put upon the stand, one by one. There were only three of them that had actually seen the murder done. They were all well dressed and looked fresh. They were real "likely-looking" fellows, respectable and as honest as the day; and they all told precisely the same story, to a hair's breadth."

The murdered man, as they had all seen, and now minutely testified, had been stricken down with an ordinary spade, and the deadly weapon was produced, with blood-stains on it, and was duly examined by the judge and by each man of the jury. In strong hands it was evidently a very deadly weapon, for it was new and its steel blade was sharp.

The accused was a very muscular man, able to strike a skull-cleaving blow. His face now grew sullen and ferocious as he looked at the spade and listened to the death-dealing testimony. The work of the district attorney and his helpers in questioning the witnesses was thorough, precise, and perfect. Their several accounts were brought out to absolute agree-

ment. The audience breathed more and more freely all the while, and the women knitted faster, and nodded at one another approvingly. This murder had happened precisely as they all knew that it had happened.

A bumblebee that came in at a window and went buzzing around the head of the judge, and then across to the jury, was of about as much importance as would be anything the prisoner's counsel could think up to say after all the testimony was in.

During all this time, moreover, he had been taking the most curious, senseless kind of course. He had asked a great many questions, as his duty was, of each of the witnesses; but all of his questions and all the answers he brought out had made it look a great deal as if he had been hired to help the district attorney convict that man. He was only driving nail after nail, so to speak, into the coffin of his unlucky client. Poor fellow, he was, after all, with nobody really trying to defend him and not one friend in the courtroom.

The murderer was proved to be very poor, ignorant, and of questionable moral or religious character. In the middle front part of the store had been an upright supporting post, and by this the cattle-buyer had been standing at the moment when he was cut down. One

of the witnesses had been behind the counter on the right; another, behind the counter on the left; the third had been in the front doorway. The striker had stood back by another similar post, against which a stack of new spades had been leaning. One of these he had taken up and had used to do the killing with.

The counsel for the defence, to do him justice, had at least taken the pains to visit the country store. He had taken closely careful measurements with a tape line which he now took out of his pocket and showed to the jury. To all these measurements he had obtained the sworn testimony of the three chief witnesses and of two other men. He made them almost tediously accurate. With his help, therefore, the net of convicting evidence was at last complete, and his client was all tangled up hopelessly in it. The audience, too, felt that they and the jury were in the net; and they were entirely satisfied.

"What will he, can he, have to say?" they whispered one to another; but the women stopped their knitting when the district attorney arose to sum up, and a very curious, unaccountable change took place in the face of the judge. He actually smiled and fanned himself, and looked half-way comfortable.

The summing-up was eloquent and able, and

the district attorney sat down at last a very much admired and popular lawyer.

Now came the time for the murderer's counsel to finish his work of giving up his client to sure justice. Of course, it was to be expected that he would make a big appeal for mercy and try to stir up the humane feelings of the jury ; but he could see by the set look on their faces that they were not exactly that kind of men. It was not going to be of any use. He stood up, and he was by all odds the tallest man in the room. Now he made his short client stand up by him, and the man's head came only to his shoulder. He took the spade itself and held it against the murderer's side, as if he were carefully comparing their lengths.

Just then I could hear a whisper away across the room, by the door, it was so still. "Something's coming, now ! He is always great before a jury !"

The gaze with which that poor, doomed fellow looked up into the face of his defender just then was awfully sad and earnest and kind of pleading. His lips quivered, too ; but they grew firm again and a sort of faith and hope began to dawn in his eyes. He sat down, and the tape line came out of his lawyer's pocket again. He began to talk to the jury in a

familiar, neighborly way, as if they all knew him and he knew all of them. He went on, then, with a dull, prosy reiteration of the testimony, now and then stooping down and measuring with his tape line upon the floor.

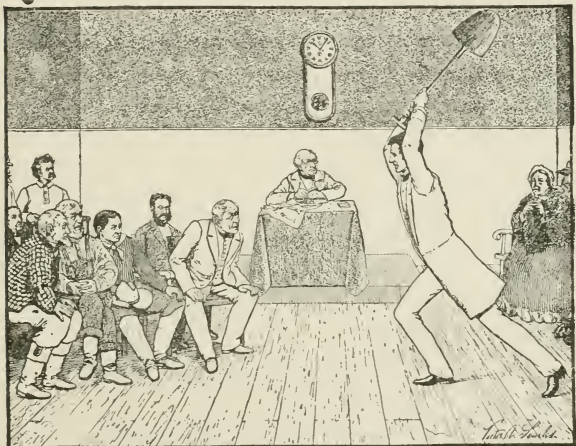
He described with accurate details the counters and the other furniture and the general contents of that country store. He made us see and fix in our minds the exact places occupied by each and every one of the human beings who had been in it at the moment when the spade came cleaving down upon the head of the cattle-buyer. The courtroom and everything in that had somehow vanished, and we were all in the store, standing around and seeing the murder done. It grew awfully vivid and exciting, and some of the women were almost ready to scream when the hit actually came; for now the spade was up in the air at the end of the tall lawyer's very long arm, and he was about to kill the cattle-buyer, there where he stood.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he suddenly exclaimed, "by the sworn testimony of all these witnesses, each man of them parroting the same story, the murdered man stood exactly there! The murderer stood precisely here!"

He struck furiously with the spade, as far as he could reach, and its point was buried in

the floor less than half-way between those two supporting posts. We could just see them and the men that stood by each of them.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he shouted, "my client is a short man. I am a tall man. I



Drawn by Victor A. Searles.

"NOW THE SPADE WAS UP IN THE AIR."

could not have done it. He could not have done it. He did not do it! Somebody else did it, then and there."

Clear, ringing, fiercely angry, was his last triumphant declaration. He threw the spade, loudly clanging, down upon the floor; and,

as he sat down in his chair, the judge himself all but laughed aloud and the jury looked happy. It appeared as if they were rather glad, after all, to see their way to give a verdict of not guilty, without leaving the jury-box.

I do not remember what afterward became of the case. That defence, however, was a pretty good example of Abraham Lincoln's way of getting hold of the minds of men and bringing them around to see the truth of any matter he was arguing.

Only a few years after that, he had the whole country for a courtroom. He won his case, too, but it was the last he ever tried, and to this day we all see that Union matter exactly as he did.



THE undulating plain to which the early French explorers gave the name of Grand Prairie began somewhere in Indiana, and extended westward nearly to the Mississippi River. Many a long year ago, I was one day riding over the central part of this plain, as yet unbroken by any ploughing. The road I was following was an old buffalo-path, and the tall grass on each side was dry and yellow under the bright November sunshine. The weather had been calm, but a wind from the north was rising.

I was a smoker then, and I reined in my horse to light a cigar. The match I lighted was a long-legged, blue-headed fellow ; and, as the Havana kindled, I dropped the lucifer without thinking of first extinguishing it. Near my horse's hoofs, however, was a dense bunch of dry grass and rosinweeds, very much as if it had been put there to receive that match. "I will give him a rest," I thought, and the animal was willing, but in a moment more he snorted and stepped quickly away.

It was not the wind which had startled him, although that had suddenly blown a stronger breath, as if it were promising a gale. A puff of black smoke, and out of the smoke a tongue of angry fire sprung up from the combustible vegetation, and the horse turned his head and whinnied his surprise as he stared at that blaze. Higher rose the wind; and swiftly away, spreading to right and left, flashed the fierce red line of the rising conflagration. In a few minutes more it was bounding off southward, uncontrollably. On the short grass rolls of the prairie it swept like a fiery mowing-machine, and in the deep hollows and dry sloughs, where the blue grass and rosinweeds were tall and densely grown, it sprung into the air four fathoms high, with a loud, triumphant roar. It would die out only away off yonder, against some watercourse, perhaps leaving nothing unburned behind it.

Now, I was not the inventor or creator of the dry grass, the north wind, or the lucifer match; and there would have been no prairie fire at all if everything had not been made ready beforehand without me. This is precisely the way in which Abraham Lincoln obtained his first nomination for President of the United States. There were then, and have been even in recent days, individuals and

cliques and "committees" aspiring to fame, who have modestly claimed the honor of having discovered Mr. Lincoln and secured for him his opportunity at Chicago.

The political fact is, that, when the Republican National Convention came together in that city in 1860, only one question seemed to be before it, after manufacturing the party platforms. This was, Shall the candidate be from the East or from the West? If from the former, it must be Mr. Seward; and that assurance gave at once to a Western choice all the many Eastern jealousies which his splendid career had there aroused against him. The question therefore was practically settled before a ballot was taken. The preliminary complimentary ballotings were as if the East did but honor Mr. Seward while inviting the West to name its own candidate. He was already named, not by the prominent politicians, or any man of them, but by the people at large, speaking for themselves through what is called the country press,—the rural journals, not the great city dailies.

There were at that time in Illinois, then the pivotal State of the West, two men who during many years and through successive political contests had grown to be the unquestioned representatives of their respective parties.

Stephen A. Douglas was "The Little Giant" of the Democracy, and his fame and power had long since become national. He, indeed, had a party of his own, and had so far outgrown the old pro-slavery conservatism that it was already rebelling against him. Abraham Lincoln, the acknowledged leader of the Whigs, was in like manner outgrowing his party, and was even to leave a large part of it behind him. He was known to be adopting ideas and assuming a position which would enable a new party, drawn from both of the old, to rally around him.

All readers of political history need only to refresh their memories a little as to the really wonderful character of the Lincoln-Douglas stump debates in the Illinois campaign of 1858. When these were ended, Mr. Lincoln's already established rank in the West had become recognized by the entire country. When we pass from these debates to the recorded impression made by Mr. Lincoln's great speech at Cooper Institute in New York City, February 27, 1860, an inquiry instantly suggests itself. Why did so vast a concourse of the best citizens of New York and New England gather to hear for the first time an entirely new man? Why did they look at him and listen with such intense interest, saying to one

another, "This is our probable candidate for president of the United States"? The reason was not as yet altogether clearly understood or acknowledged by themselves, certainly not finally accepted by the friends of other eminent Republican statesmen, East or West. Nevertheless, it was because the people of the Mississippi valley had already nominated Mr. Lincoln, in so plain-spoken and unanimous a fashion that their decision could not possibly be set aside. So powerful was the impression which they had made that Mr. Lincoln's Cooper Institute speech took upon itself somewhat of the character of a prefatory inaugural address.

A lighted match had long since been dropped into an immense field of combustible thought and feeling, and a strong north wind had been blowing the kindled fire. *The Central Illinois Gazette* was a weekly journal of large circulation, printed at the young town of West Urbana, afterward named Champaign, in Mr. Lincoln's own judicial district, the eighth, of Illinois. It was mainly owned by a well-known physician of that place, an enthusiastic anti-slavery man; and its sole editor was a young man who had grown up in New York as a disciple of Mr. Seward. I had, however, worked under Mr. Lincoln, both as editor and

stump speaker, through the memorable campaign of 1858. I had acquired great admiration for him without at all as yet understanding what manner of man he might be. It has since appeared that all his other friends, especially his very best and most intimate friends, had advanced to a somewhat similar position regarding him. I had been, however, a curious student of notable men from childhood, and had been led to make mental analyses of quite a large number of them on actual sight and hearing.

Champaign was then little more than the railway-station half of the very old settlement of Urbana, the "county town." In the early spring of 1859, Mr. Lincoln came, as usual, to attend to his law cases before the county court. He took rooms at the railway hotel, the Doane House, where I was then boarding.

One day, the doctor and I had a controversy, and almost a collision, as to the political course which the *Gazette* should henceforth take, the especial point being the name of our presidential candidate. I was not ready to name anybody, and he was; but Mr. Lincoln had not been spoken of by either of us. Neither had he as yet been mentioned by anybody else; and no other journal, large or small, had printed so much as a paragraph sug-

gesting his candidacy. If any political leader had thought of him, he had prudently concealed what may be termed his first suspicions.

Very early, the next morning after my combat with the doctor, Mr. Lincoln went to the post-office for his mail. He came back with his tall stovepipe hat as nearly full as it must sometimes have been in the days when he was postmaster of Salem, and had no other place from which to distribute the correspondence of that very small city. It may well have been the same hat, so far as any appearance of fashion or newness was concerned. The morning was chilly, and a fire was burning in the huge "egg stove" in the middle of the hotel office. He picked up a much-whittled wooden armchair, and drew it in front of the stove. He sat down, put his feet on the hearth, tipped back the chair, lodged his hat between his knees, and began to open and read his letters.

While he was thus employed, already absorbed, paying no attention to anybody or anything else, I came out from my breakfast in the hotel dining-room adjoining the office. No other soul was here but Mr. Lincoln; and at first, as a matter of course, I was about to speak to him. My head, however, was at the moment full of my controversy soon to be re-

newed with my business partner, for such the doctor was; and I paused at the office desk for the reader to finish the paper just then in his hand.

The next instant, I myself became deeply interested in that letter. It seemed to be composed of several wide pages of closely written, black-lettered, crabbed handwriting; and it made Mr. Lincoln throw his head back and shut his eyes, as if to keep the world out while he was thinking. An expression grew in his dark, strongly marked features that I had never seen there before. Perhaps nobody else had ever seen quite so much. His eyes opened once or twice, but not to see anything in that room. It was rather as if he was looking across the Atlantic Ocean or into futurity. They closed again, and the blood went out of his face, leaving it livid, sallow, and gloomy as night. I watched him, struck with sudden astonishment, until the color came back like a swift return of departed life. It was as if a great fire had been kindled in a human lighthouse; all his soul was aflame, and his face was but a window glowing with radiance that made it brilliant. Never yet had I seen anything like that upon the countenance of a human being, and the conviction came flashing into my mind: "That's the greatest man

you ever saw. Yes, sir! That's a great man!"

I had no longer any idea of saying anything to Mr. Lincoln, however, and I very silently slipped out of the Doane House. From there,



"ALL HIS SOUL WAS AFLAME."

without pausing to consult with anybody, I hurried to the *Gazette* office. The doctor had arrived before me, and was sitting at his own table, measuring out powders with a spoon.

"Doctor!" I said, with much energy, "I've

made up my mind for whom we're going to go for president!"

"You don't say! Who is it?"

"Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois!"

The spoon dropped, spilling some powders.

"What? Old Abe? Nonsense! We might go for him for vice-president. He'll never do for any more'n that. Seward and Lincoln would n't be a bad ticket. Who on earth put that into your head?"

"He did!" I shouted. "'Tis of no use, Doctor. Lincoln's the man! I'll get off this number of the *Gazette*, and then I'm off to Springfield and Bloomington, to get materials for a campaign-life editorial."

The doctor disputed; but he yielded, as was somewhat customary in that office. That number of the *Gazette* was turned off, and I went to Springfield and Bloomington. The needed information was obtained from Mr. Herndon, Mr. Leonard Swett, and others, and the editorial was printed. As I remember, it was only about two columns in length; but an experiment was tried with it. The *Gazette's* regular exchange list was large, but hundreds of extra copies of that next issue were sent all over the West, and went to many Eastern journals.

The return mails in due succession brought

a great and complete surprise. Almost all of the country papers, and some of the city dailies, to which the marked *Gazette* had been sent gave it special notice of a favorable character, more or less pronounced. A great number of them reprinted the editorial in whole or in part, and scores of them at once put Mr. Lincoln's name at the head of their columns. The match, small as it was, had been thrown into very dry grass, and the gale was rising rapidly. When, shortly afterward, some of the managing politicians awoke and looked out of their windows, they saw the entire West kindling, without any help whatever, for the nomination of Abraham Lincoln. Nobody anywhere deserved any particular credit for recognizing an established fact, and the fire in due time swept over the entire country.



Portraits of Lincoln



THERE are portraits, and yet, in a meaning which we may well wish the term to have, there are no portraits. There are only imperfect resemblances or likenesses. No two men ever saw the same landscape or even the same tree, nor did any man ever see the same landscape twice.

Nothing, it is said, can be more accurate than a really good photograph. Perhaps it is so, but nothing else can be more unsatisfactory, unless it may be the next absolutely perfect sun-picture of the same subject. The process and its results are mechanical, material; and the best that was ever obtained by them was a good representation of the man or woman, for instance, at one moment of time and under given conditions. The picture will preserve only an external expression which was upon the face before the camera, and this is indeed a great deal.

The portrait-painter, the very best, brings out upon his canvas nothing more than his

own general perception, shallow or deep, as the case may be.

On my wall yonder hangs a very rare, imperial-size photographic print of Mr. Lincoln, one of about half a dozen that were copied, enlarged, from a Brady negative; and then the original plate and all other copies were destroyed by fire. Mr. Lincoln was evidently thinking of something else while Mr. Brady was aiming at him; and therefore the result was excellent, the best with which I am acquainted. There may be others as good, each of them giving a variation belonging to another moment of time. If all, of every name and time, were gathered by some patriotic collector and arranged in a good light together, any one who knew Mr. Lincoln very well might pass along the line from one to another, complimenting each in turn, yet still hunting in vain for something in his memory, something he had at some time noted as he looked into the living face.

Do you say that this is only the reiteration, the application, of a well-known general truth or principle of art?

No doubt you are right, but it sometimes seems a cause for regret that future students of American history may not know the great President better by means of some presentation

of his face as it appeared when his soul was hard at work and his brain was on fire. No artist has ever caught that expression, and the same is true, indeed, of a host of other historically notable faces.

Do you ask me, by way of illustration, what particular moment or occasion brought out that which I so much wish had been preserved?

I was thinking of that. I studied his face during his delivery of his first inaugural address, at the eastern front of the Capitol at Washington. I had waited during several hours, with the vast throngs growing and surging behind me, while I clung vigorously to the position I had preëmpted in the front line below, to be as near as possible. Every change of his intensely earnest features, as he spoke so eloquently to his countrymen and to all the world, would have been worth preserving. Even memory cannot keep them all, however, and I know what the portrait-painters mean by their doctrine of striking an average and melting all of a man's many faces into one,—a kind of facial composite.

I can remember other notable occasions, but they were not connected with national circumstances to such a degree or in such a manner as was the inaugural address. That is, with

one exception. Not so very long after that I saw upon Mr. Lincoln's face something which even a photographic artist might have preserved if he and his camera had been there ready for instantaneous action and without the knowledge of Mr. Lincoln.

Do you remember the Sumter gun, the first cannon fired at the Union by the Confederacy, fired in the harbor of Charleston, S. C., against Fort Sumter?

Probably you did not hear it. Even if you did, you were not prepared for it beforehand, and did not know what it meant. Its awful meaning may now be condensed into a very few words. The President and his advisers had done all in their power to prevent the coming of the Civil War, but their efforts had failed. The war had come in spite of them, and its public announcement was to begin at Charleston, by the cannon which thundered and the shot that struck at half-past four o'clock on the morning of April 12, 1861.

The bombardment of the fort began with that firing, but the news of it did not reach Washington until many hours later. The fall of the fort was not known there until late on Sunday, the fourteenth, but the ink was already dry upon the President's proclamation calling the Union to arms. This went out to

the country, by mail and telegraph, on Sunday, but bore date, of course, as of the fifteenth, Monday.

During a number of days before that date I had not once been at the White House. I had official duties elsewhere; and all my spare hours, at least, had been spent in drilling with a "crack company," the National Rifles, afterward known as Company A in a battalion of United States Volunteers. I had now, however, an errand of my own to Mr. Lincoln; and I went to perform it very early on the morning of April 12. I had a favor to ask, and I knew that it might be almost impossible to get at him after the strong tide of his daily office-seekers and other visitors began to rise. I reached the White House, and my latch-key let me in, so that I could go up-stairs and lie in wait to catch him whenever he might come over from his breakfast in the residence part of the building.

The great central hall on the second floor extends from east to west along the entire length of the White House. It is cut off at each wing by very wide folding doors. I posted myself inside of the eastern doors, and walked up and down the hall and in and out of the library. I was standing in the hall, opposite the library door, when the western fold-

ing doors came suddenly open. They were left so, for Mr. Lincoln did not turn to close them behind him.

Better than any other man at the North, probably, he knew precisely how things were going on at Charleston. He also knew what the consequences must be, and that he must soon put his signature to the war proclamation already lying in his writing-desk in his office over yonder.

He came through the doorway very slowly, a step at a time, leaning forward, seeming almost to stagger as he came. Slowly, heavily, he came onward into the hall, giving very much the impression of a man who is walking in his sleep in some vague and terrible dream. It was no dream to him, although it may have been a prophetic foresight, a statesman's clear vision, of the bloody battle-fields and awful desolations which were so soon to come. Whatever they might be, he must himself appear to take the responsibility of them for all time.

His strongly marked, resolute features wore a drawn and gloomy look, and there were dark patches under his deeply sunken eyes. These, too, were not looking at me, nor were they seeing anything else in the broad hallway or the further passage. They were intensely gaz-

ing at something far away,—in the future, it might be,—and he paused for a moment in the attitude of one who is listening.

The artist and his camera should have been ready just then to take a priceless portrait of Abraham Lincoln. My own mind and memory were taking one indelibly, for I stood stock-still a few feet in front of him. As he turned his head, I ventured to say, "Good morning, Mr. Lincoln."

No word came back at once, although the far-away look in his face was now levelled at my own. His expression did not change, and I was almost alarmed. What could this mean?

"Why, Mr. Lincoln! You don't seem to know me!"

"O yes, I do," he replied, with a long-drawn sigh of utter weariness. "You are Stoddard. What is it?"

"I wish to ask a favor."

Now he awoke somewhat, and his lips pursed a little impatiently. He was being driven almost to death just then by people who came to him to ask favors.

"Well, well, what is it?"

"It's just this, Mr. Lincoln: I believe there is going to be fighting pretty soon, right here, and I don't feel like sitting at a desk, writing,

while any fight is going on. I've been drilling and serving guard duty with a company already; and, if it's ordered on duty, I want to go with it."

"Well, well," he cut me short, while his gloomy face brightened splendidly, "why don't you go?"

"Why, Mr. Lincoln, only a few days ago I took a pretty big oath that puts me under your orders; and now I'm likely to be asked to take another oath to obey somebody else. I don't see how I can manage them both without your permission. I may be ordered to service outside of the District of Columbia."

The President seemed to see something almost comical in my petition, for a half-laugh was taking shape on his countenance.

"Go ahead! Go ahead!" he said to me. "Swear in! Go wherever you are ordered to go!"

"That's all I want, Mr. Lincoln."

I remember feeling greatly relieved, for I was a young fellow then, and tremendously in awe of the President. It was so kindly a thing for him to do, you know; and I was turning away, when he called me back in a voice that had in it a curious kind of feeling.

"Young man," he said, "go just where you are ordered. Do your duty," and he added

other words that are not at all likely to be forgotten.

Very quickly I was out in the open air, thinking more about him than about anything or anybody else ; but the one thing I did not know came to my mind before Sunday,—Mr. Lincoln had been listening for the Sumter gun that morning. I saw him at about eight o'clock, three and a half hours after it was fired. Had he actually heard it, do you suppose, at that distance ? Or was he only so sure of its firing that he was going over to his office to call out the militia and the volunteers and send the ships to sea ? At all events, no portrait-painter ever had a better opportunity to do something famous than one would have who could transfer to canvas the weird, lost, all but ghastly, expression, through which, nevertheless, a strange fire of courage and determination was blazing, as the President paused in the dim hallway, gazing southward.

My company of volunteers, with a first-rate West Point captain to handle it, was sworn in on Monday morning, early. It was the very first company of volunteers sworn in anywhere ; and I went off to do soldier duty with it for three months, taking occasional furloughs for brief visits to the White House. I had obtained, however, on that Sumter-gun

morning, the first and only favor, with one exception much like it, that I ever asked of Abraham Lincoln.

Do you ask me whether I can think of any other portrait which might equal that one?

I have thought of two or three which might well hang beside it in the great gallery of a nation's loving memory, but who shall paint them now? It is of no use to talk about them. The best we can do is to study the likenesses we have, with our eyes shut, striving to look through them and beyond them.



“**W**HAT’S this? Have the office-seekers been disorderly? That’s a new one, but the other panes in that sash look as if they had been there since the house was built.”

General Leavenworth and I were standing by the window, and the room was almost thronged with men of distinction, legislators, army men, and others who were waiting there their turns to see the President. He and several members of his cabinet were in his own reception-room adjoining.

The window was one which looked southward, toward the Potomac, and across the river the first camps of the Union army were forming, and the first forts for the protection of the city of Washington were rapidly constructing. The Civil War had but just begun, and it was something very terribly new to us all.

The pane of glass to which the general called my attention had been put in so recently that the putty-marks of the glazier’s work had not yet been cleaned away. It was therefore

a new pane, and was really noticeable among the old ones, for almost everything about the Executive Mansion in those days carried upon its face a worn-out and ancient character.

"General," I replied, after looking at it for a moment, "I think I will tell you the story that belongs to the breaking of that pane of glass. Did you ever know Colonel Ellsworth, of the Ellsworth Zouaves?"

"No," said the general, "I never even saw him; but I attended his funeral in this house, in the East Room last week. Wonderfully solemn affair. The whole nation regrets his death. His was to me a very strange fate. So splendid a young fellow. So full of promise. It was sad to think of his dying as he did, on the very threshold of this horrible war. He seemed to die so uselessly, too."

"Yes," I said, "his was the first blood to be shed when our army marched into Virginia. A good many more must die before long, on both sides. I was with my own company that night, over yonder. We were the first battalion to cross the Potomac, by the Long Bridge. I served as a scout in the advance."

"I wish I had been there," he said. "I wish I might be in the first battle that is to be fought. What has that and what has Ellsworth's death to do with the smashing of this

pane of glass? Who broke it, and what did he do it for?"

"Ellsworth himself broke it," I told him. "Just one week ago to-day. He did it with that rifle that stands in the corner yonder."

"How was it?" exclaimed the general and others who had drawn nearer.

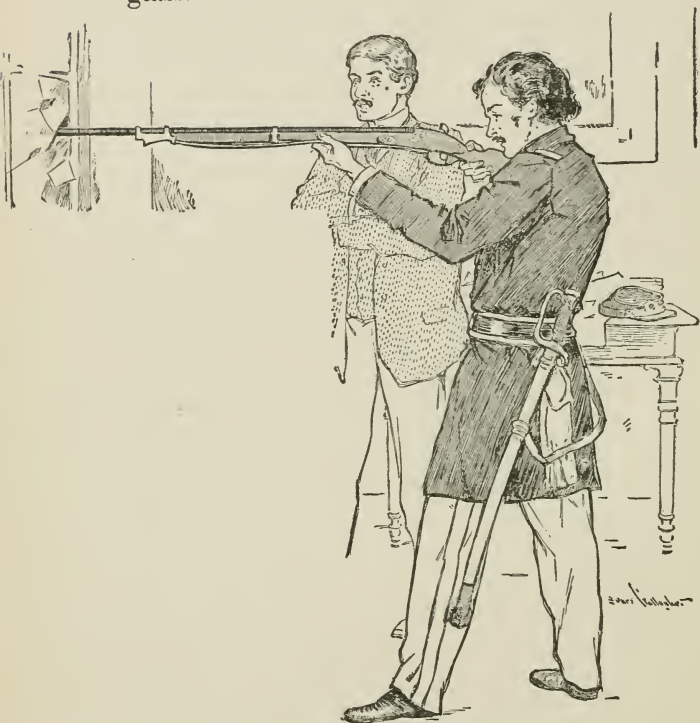
"This is not my room," I said; "it is Mr. Nicolay's and John Hay's. I do not belong here. My desk is in the northeast room, across the hall. Last Sunday morning I obtained a few hours of leave of absence from Major Smead of our battalion, and I came here to get the news and find out how things were going on. When I got here, the house was as good as empty. The President and Mrs. Lincoln were at church. The two private secretaries, Nicolay and Hay, were away somewhere. Even Willie and little Tad were said to be at church. It was a hot day, but the house seemed dark and gloomy. It's a blue time, anyway. I waited, for I was anxious to see somebody and have something to tell the boys.

"I came into this room, and I stood about where I am standing now, looking at the flags over yonder, across the river. I heard a kind of hurrah behind me; and, when I swung around, there was Ellsworth. He was almost

like a member of the President's own family. He was in from camp after news, just as I was, and to see the White House people. He was the noisiest, merriest, liveliest, and one of the handsomest young fellows I can think of. He was full of fun and fire and animation. Besides his tremendous physical energy, he was boiling over with ambition and patriotism, and he was a keen thinker. I had an idea that he would soon be a general and have command of one of the Union armies. I knew that he fully expected such a result himself. We went on into all sorts of war talk, for it was expected that Virginia would secede in three days and bring the new Confederacy one State nearer Washington and the Potomac. Close upon the heels of that would surely come important movements, and we expected to have our parts in them.

"Something or other led Ellsworth to go and pick up that rifle. It is one of the new patterns. He was a perfect drill-master and a kind of machine for accuracy in the Zouave manual of arms. It was a genuine pleasure for me to put him through the manual, and watch the wonderful exactness of his every movement. In obedience to my orders he stepped around here and there, and I had him facing this window, very near it, when I said,

‘Aim!’ Up came the rifle mechanically, and the muzzle went crashing through that pane of glass.”



“THE MUZZLE WENT CRASHING THROUGH THAT PANE.”

“I declare!” exclaimed General Leavenworth. “I don’t know why I had any curiosity about it. What did you boys have to say

about your carrying on, when the President found his window broken?"

"He didn't say anything. We had no chance to explain to him," I replied. "Do you remember how it was said they meant to murder Mr. Lincoln at Baltimore, when he came on to be inaugurated?"

"It's my opinion that they came very near doing it, too," said the general. "I've heard of other plans and plots. The fact is, I believe he is in danger all the while. He will be assassinated some day."

"There are a good many who think so," I told him. "We feel more than a little anxiety about it. If he were to be murdered just now, everything would go all to pieces. It would murder the Union itself."

"Just so! Just so!" exclaimed he. "But what has that to do with Ellsworth and his rifle and the pane of glass?"

"Well, nothing in particular," I said; "but he tried to cook up a yarn about some fellow hiding in the shrubbery down there. It was a lurking assassin who mistook one of us for Mr. Lincoln, and blazed away. The bullet missed the President, and only smashed the glass."

"I didn't hear of any such story," he interrupted doubtfully. "It didn't get out, or it would have been in the newspapers."

"Of course it would," said I; "but it had n't a chance to get out. Ellsworth broke down the first time he tried to tell it. He could n't keep his face straight long enough to humbug anybody. There was too much laugh in him. He went back to his camp, and I went to mine.

"It's only a week ago. I can hardly believe that he is gone, shot in that old Alexandria tavern for pulling down a Confederate flag. I don't like to think of it, that I shall never see his pleasant face or hear his ringing laugh again."

"My dear fellow," responded Leavenworth, "so will thousands upon thousands have to say before a great while. This is to be a long war and bloody. He will be forgotten pretty soon, for there will be so many other dead heroes."

So he and I, for we were old friends, talked on for a while, and then I got away to my soldier comrade, taking with me whatever news I had gathered.

It was long before I was again a regular worker at my desk in the White House. I forgot all about Ellsworth's pane of glass until one day, after Grant became president, I saw it there, and the old story came back to me. I was thinking of it when a summons came from President Grant to meet him in the library. Very likely the unmarked pane is in

the window yet; but, if the glass is gone, the lesson of it has not departed.

The mark of Ellsworth's blood upon the threshold of the Civil War has with it a kind of interrogation point. What is it that is worth the blood of men? What is it that may justly call for the sacrifice of life?

There are such things. The Union was a treasure worth dying for. The breaking up of the awful tyranny of Spain in the West Indies was of the full value of the precious blood that was shed. The history of those islands will forever witness that our brave boys were not thrown away upon a causeless war. They did not die in vain.

Those who were in active life during the Civil War saw our volunteers march to the front, year after year, "three hundred thousand more," from call to call, to pay the price which was demanded for the nation's life. Our Southern brethren passed through a similar experience. The dead who bravely, unselfishly gave up their lives were very many. Nevertheless, as General Leavenworth predicted, Ellsworth is almost forgotten, and in this he becomes also a type and representative of hundreds of thousands of all the unnamed heroes so eloquently described by Mr. Lincoln himself in his Gettysburg speech.

The Dark Work Room



TO me there is no other such window in America as this; for at that desk right here all the presidents of the United States, since the days of John Adams, have written or signed their great state papers, vetoes, messages to Congress, and declarations of war or peace. Do you notice that, sitting at that desk, you may look out toward the South? The Emancipation Proclamation was written there. I remember when the original draft of that historic document was brought over from this desk to my own table that I might make the first copies of it. You can imagine how my fingers tingled and how the perceptions of its tremendous consequences came pouring through my brain. Not many days later, all the nation was tingling, and Europe also, while a new life began for our millions of freedmen.

Down yonder is the Potomac, and the high ground beyond is Arlington Heights; and over that white residence that crowns them a Con-

federate flag was floating in the spring of 1861 until the very hour when the first Union army marched across Long Bridge, which you can see from here. The Marine Band in their scarlet uniforms are playing in the grounds to-day, and there are groups of listeners and strollers everywhere among the walks and shrubbery. It is really brilliant out-of-doors this pleasant day in summer, but somehow it seems dark in this workroom of the presidents.

Mr. Lincoln has gone over to the war office to read the despatches from General Grant at Vicksburg and from General Meade away up in Maryland. Lee is over the border, and a great battle is to be fought within a few days. Nobody knows beforehand what will be the result of a great battle. The only certain thing is that a great many thousands of men who are marching vigorously to-day, or talking and laughing at their halting-places, will be stark and cold in a week. Thousands more will be suffering and groaning in the hospitals, and I sometimes almost believe that the President hears them and suffers with them. He has to make an effort, I know, not to think of it, or of the mourning mothers and wives and children in so many homes. He will be back here pretty soon, but you will have time to look around you.

All the furniture is plain and old-fashioned. That long table in the middle is the cabinet council-table, and any number of notable men have sat around it, discussing the affairs of the nation and of the world. The spring-roller maps over there in that tall rack are very convenient for the study of all the military districts; but here on the President's writing-desk is one that he makes more use of. To-day it is a map, two feet square, of West Virginia, upper Maryland, and part of Pennsylvania. The little tacks with different-colored sealing-wax heads that are stuck all over it are to enable him to mark and follow the positions of the several parts of both armies. I do not know why so many pins of both colors are stuck so closely in the neighborhood of the village of Gettysburg. We have no forts there, and the place itself is of no manner of importance. It has no history. The President sits here, now and then, until late at night, working with these pins; and sometimes the blue-headed pins have had to be moved back unpleasantly or pulled out altogether. No American president has had as yet much reason for studying maps of the Old World. We have no army posts outside of the boundaries of the United States; but we may have some day, for our frontiers have

been pushed forward wonderfully since they were first half-surveyed, westward, northwestward, and southward.

“Late at night?” did you ask? “What are Mr. Lincoln’s hours of labor?” All the hours between sleep and sleep, I should say; and the bedtime hours are a kind of candle that burns



THE PRESIDENT AND THE PINS.

at both ends. Sometimes, when I have had to come to my own work unusually early, I have looked in here and seen him already busy at something or other. More than once, when I went away very late at night, the light in his room was still burning. He may not have been at work exactly, for I remember some nights when all he did was to walk up and

down the room. For all I know, however, he may even then have been thinking about something or other, or suffering.

One reason why there cannot be any regularity about the President's working arrangements is the number and kind of the other workshops and workmen. A mile away on Capitol Hill is one tremendous concern, and the President is a working member of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Every great newspaper seems to consider him its Washington correspondent and news-purveyor.

All around here, close at hand, are the others. The treasury does not trouble him so very much, for he does not pretend to be a financier. The attorney-general's office is worse; the state department, with more business, gives him less anxiety, because of that great statesman, William H. Seward. The navy office is a part of this, and we owe Mr. Lincoln for the Western river, tin-clad gunboats, and for that curious innovation, the Monitor. The war office is worst of all, and has been from the beginning. It seems to open right into this room; and all the generals do their work under the eye of Mr. Lincoln, but not to any extent under his directions. He never hampers or meddles with a com-

mander in the field. If, however, he finds any general to be too moderately successful an experiment, he may put another man in his place.

The sleeping-apartments of the Executive Mansion are off there, westerly, so that the President does not actually have to leave shop when he goes to bed. All the reception-rooms, large and small, are down-stairs. Even those occasionally turn into workshops, and compel him to spend long, toilsome evenings in shaking hands with the United States and other countries. Hardly one of these evenings ever passes without some energetic soul's finding an opportunity to offer him a criticism upon his other performances. Some of them are kindly meant and encouraging, too.

Are there never any breaks? Does he never get a breathing-spell? Yes, sometimes; but they are very short ones, such as they are. I can think of a fair illustration just now.

My room is over there in the northeast corner of the building, across the hall from Mr. Nicolay's and Mr. Hay's, the private secretaries' office. They are a terribly hard-worked pair of young men, and Mr. Lincoln showed his usual good judgment and acumen when he picked them out for their exceedingly delicate and responsible positions. They grew up under

his eye in Illinois, and he knew pretty well what was in them.

Come over, and I'll show you how it was. That massive chest of drawers, the office table, facing the door is the correspondence-desk, and that is my chair, behind. Thomas Jefferson was the inventor of that kind of swing-around armchair. Between the outer end of the table and the fireplace is a very different chair. It is oddly designed, sloping backward, with a slender mahogany frame and a leather seat without any cushions. It is of Mexican make, and was presented to President Jackson by grateful citizens of our sister republic in recognition of his friendly course in their behalf. It became so great a favorite with the old hero that ever afterward it has been known as "Andrew Jackson's chair." It is worth its weight in gold, but it will one day be sent away as old junk by the upholsterers who will furnish the White House.

I sat behind my table here one evening, and Mr. Nicolay sat in that other chair, a little behind me at the left. At the fireplace, with one elbow on the mantel, stood John Hay. He was always the life of any place he ever got into, and he was telling us a story of the liveliest kind. That was a thing, too, that he could do remarkably well; and he had a laugh

of his own that was catching. He and I had been alone in the room when he began to tell that story, and at the first of its humorous points we both broke down. That is, we both broke out into peals of laughter, which to some men might have seemed out of place, not in keeping with the solemn gloom of the White House at night, in war time. To tell the truth, we had not supposed that there was anybody else awake in this part of the building.

Mr. Nicolay was at his desk across the hall, however; and he at once put down his pen and came over to find out what was going on. Of course the story had to begin again, and it went on as if there were no ghosts of lost battles stalking dismally along the shadowed corridors of the national headquarters. The funny point was reached a second time, and again the peals of reckless merriment went out to startle the proprieties, if they had been there.

"John, just tell that story over again. I want to hear it."

The hall door had opened silently, and in walked President Lincoln, his dark face brightening with a smile of relief. Down he sat, right there, in Andrew Jackson's chair, and stretched himself out to hear the story. For

once, you see, he had gone all the way out of his workshop, leaving even his tools behind him; and none of the other workmen, states-



“JOHN, JUST TELL THAT STORY OVER AGAIN.”

men or generals, were anywhere near. He was hiding away in a sort of place of refuge, ever so far away from councils and camps and battle-fields.

John Hay did not stir from his post at the mantel, and he began at the beginning, doing it better than ever. That same first ludicrous climax was reached, and neither of us boys laughed more unrestrainedly than did the President. His feet came heavily down upon the floor, and he lay away back in Andrew Jackson's chair. The laughter was checked at last, and the narrative had just begun again, when the half-closed door from the hall was pushed open widely.

"Your Excellency, it's Mr. Seward. He's gone into your room, sir. I think it is Mr. Stanton, too, and a general with him. May be it's General Hallick, that's coming up the stairs." There stood old Edward Moran, the doorkeeper, rubbing his hands one over the other and looking almost comically regretful and apologetic. He was the last man to interrupt fun willingly, but his duty compelled him.

Mr. Lincoln sat still for a moment, all the merriment first, and then the light, fading out of his face. Then he slowly rose without saying a word, and walked out across the hall to his workroom. It did seem as if he all but staggered, as a man might in shouldering somewhat unexpectedly, suddenly, some oppressive, overweighting burden. We three were also

silent, looking at one another. Who might guess what news of good or evil had brought to the President's office at that hour the men who had been announced by old Edward?

The breathing-spell, the respite from pain and toil, was at all events ended. It was of the usual pattern, nevertheless. The story was never finished, for Mr. Nicolay went back to his own room, and Mr. Hay went with him, and I still had work on my table that must be completed before sleep.



“**T**HAT’S the way, is it, that you deal with the President’s mail? This is shameful! Mr. Lincoln ought to know this! A mere boy, too, to be given such a responsible position!”

He was a very portly old gentleman, fine-looking and exceedingly dignified. He was, from his appearance, such a man as might be governor of a State, for instance, or president of a great railway company. He had been sitting there, in Andrew Jackson’s chair, as it was called, near my table in the northeast room of the White House, during a full half-hour. He had been waiting his turn to go in for a conference of some sort with the President. A number of other visitors had been admitted one after another; but as yet he had not been sent for, and even that may have irritated him.

At all events, not having anything else to do then and there, he had been keenly watching the swift, decisive processes of opening and disposing of the Executive Mansion mail. He had even seen the post-office messenger deliver

a full bag of it, large parcels and small, pouring them out upon the table before me. Then he had seen that every envelope came open as soon as it was reached, whether addressed to Mr. Lincoln himself or to his wife.

It might possibly be that at some time or other he himself had sent important communications to be handled in like manner. At all events, a great many thousands of his fellow citizens must have done so, in utter ignorance of this merciless business going on at the correspondence-table. He could feel for others, if not for himself, and his face had grown red with indignation while Andrew Jackson's chair was becoming almost too small to hold him.

On either side of the secretary's chair were tall willow-ware wastebaskets, and into one or the other of these had gone a very large proportion of the epistles, envelopes and all, without note or comment, the instant that their character was ascertained. Beyond, near the wall, in a large and growing heap, were thrown upon the floor all manner of newspapers and journalistic clippings after very hurried glances at any part of their columns marked black, red, or blue to demand especial attention. Possibly the old gentleman may at some time have written a stunning editorial or printed an import-

ant letter. Upon the table itself lay an array of large official envelopes with printed addresses. Into one or another of these, every minute or so, was thrust some document upon which the secretary had written a brief indorsement, indicating some bureau or other destination. Some of these envelopes were already sealed now, ready to send away.

The watcher had been also watched, for he was not by any means the first of a number of angry critics to occupy a chair of indignant observation in the neighborhood of those wastebaskets. A kind of preparation had been made for him as the letter-opening went on. A number of writings, selected as they came to hand, and of even exceptionally strong characteristics, had been laid aside like so much fixed ammunition.

Down came his feet, in a moment more, with a thumping force, and he stood erect, glaring at the secretary.

"I don't believe Mr. Lincoln can be at all aware of this ——"

"Sir," I said to him calmly, "will you be good enough to examine that lot of letters for yourself? I should be glad to have your opinion as to whether or not the President of the United States can turn aside from his somewhat important public duties and give his time

to that sort of thing. I can assure you that he is really quite busy nowadays."

The dignified old gentleman took the selected epistles, sat down again, and began to read them, while I returned to my work with one eye at liberty. If his face had been red



"I DON'T BELIEVE MR. LINCOLN CAN BE AT ALL AWARE OF THIS."

before, it was fiercely blazing now, for he was undoubtedly a decent man and a patriot.

Abuse, scurrility, threats, utter insanities, the brutalities, enmities, and infamies of the President's letter-bag had been pitilessly given him. It was too much for him, altogether. He positively could not wade on through the whole of that stuff. He threw it contemptuously upon the floor, exclaiming: "Young

man, you are right! No, sir. What beasts men are! They ought to be shot or hung! The President ought not to be bothered with it! Does this sort of thing go on all the time?"

It might be really worth while to explain the matter somewhat, and I did so. He became deeply interested, and was entirely reasonable. He agreed with me that the commander-in-chief could not be expected to give a personal examination to an average mail of two hundred and fifty parcels a day, of all sorts and sizes, many of them really weighty bundles of documents pertaining to varied business before the several departments.

There were other points in my defence. The President had absolutely refused to be informed of letters which threatened personal violence. I was never permitted so much as to mention one of these, or, in fact, any other communication which did not imperatively and beyond all question demand his personal inspection. Of course, when in doubt, I might consult Mr. Nicolay or Mr. Hay. There had been occasions, necessarily, when I went to him myself with seemingly unavoidable documents, and once I had got myself laughed at for the angry interest I had taken. He was, however, about the coolest man living, so far

as any ordinary cause for irritation might be concerned, and he cared absolutely nothing at all for mere vituperations, even from high quarters.

The dignified old gentleman grew pleasanter, even sociable, before he was summoned by a messenger to go in and have his own turn with the President; but he had looked in upon a very curious department of American literature.

Perhaps the first impression received by one attempting an exhaustive analysis of that heap of correspondence, all on one side, might relate to the extreme simplicity of the ideas entertained by vast numbers of men and women as to their right to the personal services of a man in Mr. Lincoln's place. Here, for instance, was a worthy soul out West, who had applied for a patent, and would be obliged if the President would step into the patent office and see about it and hurry the matter up. Another writer had somehow been beaten in a lawsuit before the courts of his locality, and wished to obtain advice from Mr. Lincoln as to whether or not it would be worth while for him to bring it before the Supreme Court.

Not a few of the letters related to asserted remarkable improvements in guns, cannons, and other war materials. Not least notable among these, it may be, was a man in Illinois

who wrote that he had invented a cross-eyed gun. It had two barrels which projected from the breech at proper angles, so aiming side-wise. He knew, he said, enough cross-eyed men to form a regiment to be armed with these destructive weapons. He could march them up the Potomac, clearing out the Confederates from both banks at once, "for, by thunder, Mr. Lincoln, I'm cross-eyed enough to be the colonel."

This queer fellow's proposition was quite as valuable as were a great many others that were urged upon the government. His tactics, too, were as good as were those of a host of army-campaign plans that were submitted. A principal feature of most of these seemed to be the author's idea that the Southern States were a checker-board, and that across it, to and fro, army corps and the like might be jumped and landed irrespective of their sizes and of such things as intervening mountains and rivers, almost regardless, also, of armed gatherings of riflemen in uniforms of gray or butternut. A like idea lives to-day, evidently, in the minds of countless critics of the current military operations in the Philippines.

Here, on this inside corner of my table, lies, one day, a letter which I can hardly make up my mind to destroy. No, it is not especially

important; but I really believe Mr. Lincoln must see it. It is a pretty long letter, too, written clearly in a woman's hand. There are careless ink spatters. There are several blistered places, as if it had been sprinkled with hot water. The woman has lost all her sons. They all died in battle, and she is left alone. She is one of many American mothers, too, very many! But she writes to Mr. Lincoln that she is praying for him day and night, and for the Union. Yes, I must, I will take it in to him myself by and by.

Did I do so? What did he say?

Well, I cannot remember exactly what I said when I handed him that letter; but I knew, like a flash, that he wanted me to get out of his room and back to my own while he read it alone by himself. Perhaps he saw something wet on my face; I don't know. He never said anything to me about it afterward. It was only a specimen letter, after all, for there were a great many good, brave, praying women all over the country; and so the Union was preserved, although it cost them their sons that died in battle.

The volunteer statesmen were very numerous, and their epistles were generally very long. The fate of these was generally short, owing to the handiness of the willow baskets.

About one-half, at least, of the varied materials forwarded by mail to the executive office was simply misdirected, in the ignorance of the senders. It consisted of legitimate business with the government, fairly belonging to one or another of the many bureaus of the departments. All these were easily referred to their proper places, and that was the end of them. The like was true of all the innumerable applications of the office-seekers.

Not any too frequently, a formal acknowledgment of a letter's arrival seemed to be called for; but there was little time for mere courtesies in those days, and every such reply was a cutting off of the proposed correspondence. There could be, however, only small question of the correctness of one opinion that grew upon me. This was, that whenever a man went out-and-out crazy, his first delirious impulse told him to sit down and write to Mr. Lincoln. The name of these lunatics was Legion. Among them, during many months, was a poor fellow who wrote imperative mandates concerning all manner of public policy, professing to dip his pen in blood, which looked altogether like an inferior article of red ink, and signing himself the Angel Gabriel. Very numerous indeed, also, were the communications, medium-wise, from the spirit world, the

contents whereof might go to prove, if genuine, that there are very badly conducted insane asylums in the other world.

The printed matter for which a careful reading was requested, perhaps expected, was simply enormous, and its perusal would have required Mr. Lincoln to be set free from the trammels of time.

Something like this, it may be, goes on at the present day, with the supposable difference that there is now less excitement, no bitterness, and that people generally are better informed. The business relations of the White House and the departments must be better understood.

It is to be hoped that there is yet another difference. The meanest of all the many brutes who attempted to sting Mr. Lincoln wrote to him concerning his wife, or else addressed their unmanly tirades to her in person. I wished then that these wolves could have known, for their consolation, how rigid was the rule with which she forbade any envelope whatever, save letters from her own sister, to reach her hands without a first opening and examination by myself. None of the poisoned arrows hit her after the first few were shot and the rule was made. She was a woman of altogether too much intelligence and courage to be greatly an-

noyed by the purely satanic part of the general enmity, and she deemed it superfluous to be informed as to what it might accomplish with pen and paper. The paper-cutter on the correspondence secretary's desk was, therefore, a defensive weapon.



THE NIGHT COUNCIL



AWAY back yonder in the dark year 1861, late one evening I sat by my table in the northeast room of the White House at Washington. I was hard at work with paper-knife and pen, opening and disposing of innumerable letters that lay in a confused heap at my elbow, for it seemed as if all the nation were disposed to open personal correspondence with the President. I was only a kind of human mill to which very much such a grist was brought for grinding several times every day. A man would come through the door before me with a leather mail-pouch. He would unlock the pouch, pour out its contents on the table, and go out again without saying a word. Then every envelope had to be opened, and the fate of whatever was in each covering was determined with lightning rapidity. Much chaff, little wheat, and a great deal of out-and-out evil came addressed to Mr. Lincoln during all the bitter-spirited war years.

So far as I knew, I was all alone upon that floor, for the other secretaries had finished

their work and gone out. No mail-carrier was due at that hour ; but the door opened, and a man came in. He did not have any locked pouch in his hand, but a very large leather portfolio, such, for instance, as might be used for holding maps and broad documents like parchment commissions, civil or military. I arose as he entered, for I was conscious of a sudden wonder as to what he might be doing with that portfolio.

“Stoddard,” he said, “I’m going over to Seward’s. I want you to take this and come along with me.”

Something else was said, no matter what, and I left my heap of unfinished mail-matter behind me.

Mr. Lincoln seemed to be in an unusually cheerful mood, with occasional lapses into fits of absorbing thought. One of these came upon him at the head of the stairs, and there he lingered for a moment as if he might have forgotten something and was trying to remember it. His next pause was in the porch outside of the front door, when he discovered that it was raining. Back he stepped, and called to “old Edward” Moran, the doorkeeper, to bring him his umbrella. The doorkeeper would find it, he was assured by the commander-in-chief of the United States armies and

navies, "in the corner by my desk, near the window."

Up went Edward; and in a few moments more he was down again, smiling sarcastically and rubbing his hands one over the other in a manner that was habitual with him whenever he had something especial to say.



"IT'S NOT THERE, YOUR EXCELLENCY."

"It's not there, your Excellency. I'm thinking the owner may have come for it."

"Go and get me another, then," commanded the President, laughing heartily at the manner more than the matter of Edward's drollery.

The next search for an umbrella was successful, although there was more spread than

splendor in the very antiquated shelter tent that was brought by the doorkeeper. Under its protection, nevertheless, we walked on out of the White House grounds, and as we went Mr. Lincoln related merrily sundry other of Edward's comicalities.

"He has been here," he said, "since Taylor's time. He was a great favorite with President Taylor. Did you ever hear his hit upon Fillmore's carriage?"

I replied that I had never heard it.

"Well, then, President Fillmore used to tell it himself. Shortly after Taylor's death and Fillmore's inauguration it was necessary for him to procure a carriage. A gentleman that was breaking up housekeeping had one to sell, and Fillmore went, one day, to take a look at it and see if it would do. He took old Edward with him. The carriage seemed to suit well enough; but Fillmore turned to Edward, and asked him, 'Edward, how will it do for the President of the United States to ride in a second-hand carriage?' Edward rubbed his hands hard, and answered him, 'Sure, your Excellency, you're only a second-hand president, you know.'"

Any passer-by at that moment, listening to the anecdote and the laugh that followed might well have supposed that somebody a

little belated was going home cheerfully, unoppressed by business cares and certainly not aware of being in any shadow of personal peril.

Was there, then, at that time any danger of violence to Mr. Lincoln?

I do not know. There may not have been any, although there were bitter enmities enough. Hardly a day passed without the arrival of threatening letters which he refused to know anything about. Neither were they ever seen by other eyes than mine. Most of them, doubtless, may be regarded as only the empty expressions of brutal animosities, whether their envelopes were addressed to the President, or, as some of the worst of them were, to his wife.

At all events, there were no armed guards to be seen around the White House grounds that rainy night. Not even a solitary sentinel was posted to inquire the purposes of whoever might come or go to or from the headquarters of the armies of the republic.

The house then occupied by the secretary of state was on the easterly side of Lafayette Square, standing by itself, the second house from the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue. It was wide-fronted, without any basement story, and had a central hall. On the right of this,

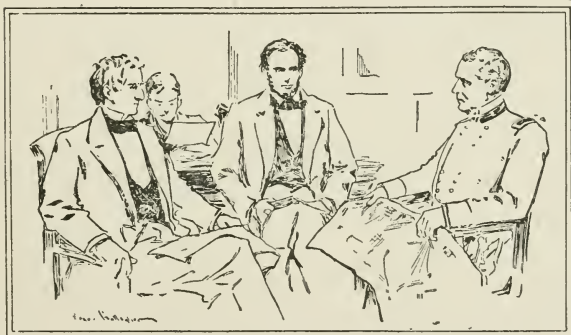
at the main entrance, was an ample reception-room, into which a servant conducted us that evening. A bright fire of logs was blazing in the fireplace. In front of this was a business-office table covered with green leather, littered with books and papers.

The President took a chair before the fire, and at once all the cheerfulness went out of him. I found a chair for myself behind the table, on which I deposited my portfolio. I had already been informed whom we were to meet, but not what for.

A long minute or so went by ; and then the hall door opened, and in walked Mr. Seward, accompanied by Major-General John A. Dix, then recently placed in charge of civil rather than military affairs in Maryland and a large adjoining territory. He was a short, slight, handsome man, of exceedingly polished manners, and I, as a born New Yorker, had been very proud of his noble conduct while a member, as secretary of the treasury, of the last cabinet of President Buchanan. The country owed him a debt of gratitude on that account much more than for all the good service he had previously rendered as governor of the State of New York, as Senator of the United States, or as diplomat representing the nation in Europe.

As soon as my formal introduction as one of the President's private secretaries was over, I was quite willing to get back again behind the table while these three remarkable men sat before the fire and discussed the critical aspect of national affairs. All my remaining duties were occasional responses to demands for maps and papers to be hunted for in the portfolio. Then a sort of deep awe came upon me as their conversation passed deliberately, slowly, from point to point. Their especial subject for consultation was the policy thenceforth to be pursued with the border States, Maryland, western and eastern Virginia, Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, and Missouri. It was a subject with which General Dix, for some reason, was supposed to be exceptionally familiar, and concerning which he had formed decided opinions of his own. These views, as they were now brought out conversationally, were found to be very nearly, but not quite, in accord with those of the President and the secretary of state. It was a curiously informal and yet unspeakably important night council. Upon the decisions made then and there might depend the immediate future of large populations, States, and, in proportional consequence, the welfare of the whole nation, the outcome of the Civil War itself.

The long conference ended at last. The maps and papers were restored to the portfolio. The three great men shook hands heartily, and Mr. Lincoln set out homeward. It was raining only lightly ; but the umbrella was up, and the President walked on under it very slowly, as if he were thinking. Perhaps it was



“IT WAS A CURIOUSLY INFORMAL COUNCIL.”

my State pride which induced me to venture the question, “Now, Mr. Lincoln, what do you think of General Dix ?”

He was silent for a moment.

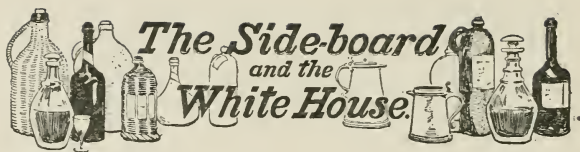
“What do I think of him ?” he then said. “Well ! This is the first time I ever met him ; but from what he has said to-night, from the advice he has given, I should say that General Dix is a wise, a very wise man.”

That was satisfactory, and we walked on to the breastwork-like stone parapet of the sidewalk at the northeasterly corner of the White House. Here the President halted and stood still, gazing southward. In that rainy, misty gloom, it was impossible for him to see the Potomac or the fort-crowned heights beyond it. There were dimly glimmering points of light here and there, but all that he was staring into was as a sort of symbol of the great darkness which at that date had settled over the country. Tears like rain were falling everywhere, and the wisest as well as the bravest confessed their utter inability to forecast the things that were to come.

Not a syllable was spoken during that prolonged, absorbed, gloomy look toward the South, toward the Confederacy.

Then, moving wearily, the President turned away to the portico, and I shut down the umbrella. Old Edward had been watching, for the door swung open and a stream of light sprang out. There had been a comicality on his lips, ready for speech ; but the old doorkeeper looked into Mr. Lincoln's face, and all the prepared fun died out of his own. Not toward the household side of the mansion, but up the other stairs to his business office, the President led the way, as if he had yet more work to do

—if there was ever any hour when he had not. The portfolio was left upon the long cabinet-council table, and I returned to my northeast room ; but I did not feel like opening or reading any more letters. I knew more than I had ever known before concerning the deadly dangers besetting the United States, and also much more of the deep-thinking wisdom and patriotism by which those dangers were to be met and overcome. Not by clashing army corps upon a battle-field, but by three statesmen before a fireplace, had the nation been well defended and its future salvation in a manner assured.



IN the old, old days before the Civil War, and very nearly at the end of that era of excitement and extravagance, there still lingered in Washington city society one objectionable remnant of ancient notions concerning hospitality. Perhaps it was a small yet treasured fragment of the ancient baronial custom of "open house."

Its most complete representative, and often very handsome indeed, was "the sideboard" in each dining-room, and next to this was the "locker" in parlor or library.

As for the former, it might be brilliant with cut-glass goblets and decanters and with wine-glasses of varied tints and patterns. With these, whether always visible or only ready to be brought out, were brandy, old rum, gin, whiskey, port, sherry, Madeira, and cigars.

According to the tastes, the pocket, or the credit of the householder were the glitter and the perfection or profusion of the social stimulants ready for offering.

All this was in the houses of men of means, but vastly more numerous were the minor imitations. By the sure operation of the laws of finance, and also by the requirements of local household or office proprieties, the lists of refreshments indicated diminished in number and in kind until in the lower grades of purchasing ability even the brandy disappeared. On the most extended line or level all that still was free was the plain glass tumbler and plain whiskey.

Thoughtful people, especially "total-abstinence" people, of the present day may not all be aware how tremendous is the improvement which has been made. They may be able to thank God more heartily for the present and to gain courage and faith concerning the future if now and then the past shall be held before their eyes with even offensive plainness. If by this means they are enabled to perceive more clearly the kind of Egypt from which the Lord has led us out, then they may not murmur quite so much in the moral wilderness which yet remains, for we are a great deal nearer Canaan than we were a half-century ago. It was, after all, only an all but universal evil which found this form for its seductive expression among the preservers of old fashions at Washington.

In the Capitol building itself were then not only the authorized restaurants in each wing, Senate and House of Representatives, but also the "hole in the wall," with its door so very near to that of the Supreme Court rooms, at the centre, and the committee rooms with their well-supplied lockers. Besides these were the numerous clerk-room desk "crypts" for miscellaneous hospitality, that were easier far for a visitor to find than was the historic crypt under the foundations of the original structure, designed by its architect to receive the bones of George Washington.

The "keeper of the crypt" was paid a sinecure salary during several successive generations, and the legislation for the extinction of his office was obtained with difficulty. Much more difficult to engineer was the suppression of some of the unnecessary barrooms, public and private, at the Capitol.

In that day, if a man who was for any reason a welcome visitor, especially if he were accompanied by friends, went into parlor or office which contained due provision for hospitality, he was sure of a pressing, an all but irresistible, invitation to drink, although that is a coarse, unpleasant term with which to describe free-hearted friendliness.

For even a stranger to respond by a point-

blank refusal was often to run a serious risk of giving personal offence. There is no danger at all that any one will or can form an exaggerated idea concerning the universality or mischief of this custom. It was ruinous.

The Executive Mansion, the abode as well as the business office of the presidents of the United States, from the day when it was first occupied, half-finished, by the Adams family, had a character of its own, changing only a little, from term to term, with the character of its illustrious tenant *pro tem*. It was generally regarded by the people of Washington themselves and by many who came to it from far corners of the land as being necessarily a house for the offering of generous hospitality of this description. The attempts of more than one of the presidents to comply with this absurd demand upon them resulted in almost their financial shipwreck.

There are many legends of the old-time White House entertainments and "receptions." Some of them we may well wish to believe too highly colored and untrustworthy. At least, there is no need to print them; but the proceedings at the inauguration of President Jackson, for instance, have been published with some fulness, and will serve for all useful illustration and suggestion. An examination

of that record enables us to mark the advance in public opinion by reason of which some things which once were customary are now impossible.

The dawn of the better state of things appeared some years before the Civil War; but as yet it was only a dawn, and not a bright one. There were then already a number of official and other notable households wherein not anything objectionable was to be encountered.

The list of these was increasing only too slowly, and it would now be invidious to specify any of them by name. The households and the clean-kept public offices were rare exceptions, like oases in a desert,—a thirsty desert; and they were so maintained in defiance of a sentiment or opinion the power of which can now be but imperfectly understood.

There yet remains, curiously, a class of men, distinguished and otherwise, who speak at times regretfully, admiringly, of the vanished customs, the abolished freedom and good fellowship.

There is a very interesting moral and religious history to be read and pondered over, if we turn from the capital to the country at large, and try to trace the course of the ac-

knowledgeed improvement. One very powerful agency or help in bringing about the revolution at Washington, however, worked altogether silently, and it seems to deserve a record. A sort of shudder went through the hearts of the preservers of the ancient free and liberal customs, early in 1861, when the incredible assertion was passed from lip to lip that there was thenceforth to be no wine or anything else of a hospitable nature to be obtained at the Executive Mansion. The good old days were indeed felt to be passing away; and the new, the strange, the unknown, was coming in.

There were, of course, many who refused belief, and took it for granted that, if the presidential sideboard had vanished from its former place of glitter and renown, the locker, at least, must still remain, with its treasures of secret gratification for the palates of the favored and initiated few. By others it was tacitly assumed that Mr. Lincoln was really receiving too many visitors of all sorts, and anything like treating was of necessity temporarily to be dispensed with. There was a great deal of pressure upon him, you know, and his friends must bear it in mind.

Precisely what was the nature of the new order of things may be illustrated by an inci-

dent which was almost amusing. Among Mr. Lincoln's warm admirers in the city of New York were several gentlemen with social tendencies. They knew little of his personal habits and prejudices; but they were aware that he was from the West, and believed themselves familiar with Western customs. They were also traditionally aware of the costly exactions of White House hospitality, and they determined to aid him in bearing that part of the tremendous burden put upon him. Their intentions, according to such light and knowledge as they had, were patriotic, and their performance was liberality itself. They made out a "wine list" which omitted hardly anything supposedly to be required by the sideboard or locker of the commander-in-chief, and the supply included even his dinner-table. Everything sent was choice of its kind, and it was expressed, prepaid, with warm declarations of good will. To their credit be it also said that hardly any of the several givers of that lot of stimulants for an overworked president deemed it in good taste to allow so much as their names to be communicated with the gift.

The first that I heard of it was when a sudden, peremptory summons came up to me from Mrs. Lincoln to come and see her at once.



MRS. LINCOLN.

From an old daguerreotype.

I hurried down-stairs to her reception-room, the historic Red Room, somewhat anxious to know what might be the matter. There was enough, indeed, for serious consultation; for she rapidly unfolded to me the story of the New York contribution.

"Now!" she exclaimed, in very comical perplexity, "what are we to do? I don't wish to offend them, of course. But Mr. Lincoln won't have it in the house. He never uses any. I never touch it myself. And O, there is so much of it!"

"Where is it, Mrs. Lincoln?"

"Why, it's all down-stairs, in the basement. I haven't told Mr. Lincoln, and I don't wish to bother him about it. I wish you would just decide the matter, and tell me what to do. What answer shall I give to these gentlemen? What am I to do with all the liquors and wines?"

Her dismay had set me laughing, but I thought I could see a way out of her very serious dilemma.

"As to them," I said, "madam, all you need to do is to send an entirely formal acknowledgment to whoever has acted as their agent. Only a business-like receipt for parcels duly delivered. As for the wines and liquors, don't let them stay in the house at all. Do not worry the President about it, either. Make

a fair division of the whole lot among the army hospitals, and ship 'em right away. The surgeons and nurses will know what to do with them. Put all the responsibility upon the scientific people. If any of the sick soldiers need it, there it is."

"That's exactly what I will do!" she exclaimed. "Every bit of it shall go out, right away. Then, if anybody ever says anything about it, all I need to do is to tell what we did with it."

It may be that the kindly New Yorkers themselves would not have felt any sense of personal disappointment if they had known the actual destination and service of their carefully selected assortment, but I do not know that they were ever made aware of it.

All this was very nearly at the beginning of the Lincoln administration; and the kind of moral testimony which it represents went on in silent power year after year. Men did not feel like drinking before going to call upon Mr. Lincoln. Officials of all sorts felt the unseen pressure, and it was all the while aided, added to, by the precept and example of several prominent statesmen. Not one of them preached on temperance. Mr. Lincoln did not, but the tone of official conduct and life underwent a gradual change.

Nothing like perfection has yet been attained in Washington, or anywhere else; but most of the "barroom" sideboards comparatively have departed, or at least have disappeared. With them has gone away a vast amount of the most pernicious, poisonous temptation.

At all events, the result, such as it is, is a forcible lecture in itself upon the power of example and the responsibilities of those who are in high places.

THE SENTRY AT THE GATE.

HERE was once a great fire in the outskirts of the city of Washington. No buildings of importance perished, but a number of temporary wooden structures provided by the quartermaster's department for the storage of supplies for the army. With these and with their very valuable contents of hay, straw, grain, and provisions, many horses also were burned. For obvious reasons, the loss was somewhat notable, and the fire was said to have been lighted by a spark from a cigar.

This being taken for granted, an order went out instantly from the headquarters of the military officer in command of the city, considered only as a fortified post of the Army of the Potomac, rigidly prohibiting all smoking within a specified distance of any of the numerous "public buildings."

The energetic army man had in his mind, no doubt, the sundry structures of a military character and use, but the consequences contained something like a lesson or lecture upon

“militarism.” This is a thing with which the American people had never had anything to do, prior to the Civil War. It then grew rapidly to very large, mushroom proportions, and it was not entirely rooted out until several presidential elections had labored with it.

The Capitol and many other of the public buildings at Washington are very nearly fire-proof. They are, at least, in no danger whatever from small cigar-sparks. A few of the older affairs were then of a more combustible character, but had escaped from innumerable smokers and were in no immediate danger whatever.

The Executive Mansion, not at all fire-proof, is one of the public buildings, and it was manifestly covered by the order, literally construed. Something like obedience was to have been expected from President Lincoln himself, as he never smoked. He was not the kind of man, moreover, to set his own house on fire; but I have seen the sparks fly out in all directions from the blazing logs in the old-fashioned fire-places of the White House.

As to the personal habits of other presidents, there was a legend that Andrew Jackson used to sit and smoke in his Mexican chair in front of the fireplace in his office-room, until two of the bricks of its arch were deeply footmarked.

At about the time when Mr. Lincoln entered the office, that arch was reconstructed, and Mr. Lincoln expressed much regret that those particular bricks had not been preserved. There was a subtle, well-understood meaning in his wish to put his own feet in the tracks left by the old hero who had dealt so firmly with the first beginnings of "nullification and secession."

There was now no real danger of any other kind of fire at the Executive Mansion.

A very zealous military man was in command of the regiment of volunteers, infantry, from which details were made for the new "guard" provided for the personal safety of the President. Some of the companies of this regiment were composed, for the greater part, of patriotic German-Americans, with European ideas concerning strict discipline and army orders.

Besides the guards on foot, a cavalry regiment familiarly known as Scott's Nine Hundred had been ordered to furnish details for mounted patrols and videttes to complete the security of the national headquarters.

Not very late, one dark autumnal evening, I was strolling along Pennsylvania Avenue, past the corner of the Treasury Building. I was smoking a cigar, and was in no hurry, al-

though there was a large pile of epistolary work upon my table in the northeast room. As I drew near to the open gate of the roadway that leads from the Avenue to the house, I paused for a moment to consider the changed order of things. It was as the change from peace to war, from the civil authority to army rule.

Just inside of the gateway, in the carriage road, sat a cavalryman, motionless, but ready at any moment for the use of sabre or carbine. I can remember now that his horse stood as still as if he had been cast in bronze. He looked much more like a horse, however, than do some of the bronze castings.

A few paces from him, on the paved footpath at his right, near the small gate for pedestrians, stood a tall volunteer whose rifle carried a peculiarly effective-looking sabre bayonet. I had carried one of those things myself when in service, and knew how useful they were to break up hardtack, split kindlings, or poke a dull fire. There is no record, I believe, of their employment for butchering human beings. At every other gateway or outside sallyport of any kind around the modest palace of the dictator of America, and entirely without his direction, just such military protection had been given him. Owing, how-

ever, to the nature of the fences and the extent of the ground, Scott's Nine Hundred and the infantry might as well have been south of the Potomac so far as any real danger to the President might be concerned.

Swinging along somewhat wearily, listlessly, I had turned through the smaller gate, puffing at my weed, when I was suddenly brought up by a flash of glittering steel apparently many inches in width, carrying both point and edge, such as they were.

"Put out dot cigar-r-r!"

"What?" I responded, more than a little astonished at this military invasion of my accustomed privileges in the neighborhood of my own official workshop. But again the bayonet flashed, and there were words unmistakably German, followed by a sternly uttered repetition of the command.

"Put out dot cigar-r-r!"

I offered explanations, but they were given all in vain, for the Teutonic sentinel was furiously firm.

I was compelled, then, to recall to mind the letter, if not the spirit, of the order for the salvation of the public buildings; and I pitched away all that was left of the Cuban peril I was bringing upon them.

My walk began again, but I was already

aware that the cavalryman's rigidity had departed from him. He had been swaying side-wise in his saddle as if his half-suppressed



“PUT OUT DOT CIGAR-R-R!”

laughter might dismount him, and I had believed that he was laughing at me. Now, also,

his bronze horse curveted and wheeled, and in a moment more he was pulling up beside me.

"Mr. Secretary! Wait a moment! The best joke you ever heard!"

I halted readily and faced him; for he had not drawn his sabre, and his pistols remained in their holsters.

"What's the matter? I supposed I had a right to do as I pleased around here."

His horse plunged a little, as if he had some fun in him, but the rider succeeded in keeping near enough to tell me. "It was n't an hour ago that Germany halted Stanton himself right there, just as he did you."

"What? The secretary of war? Did he make him throw away his cigar?"

"Well, he did! Stanton all but ran against him in the dark, and Germany shouted at him, 'You puts out dot cigar!' till he gave it up. But that was n't all. Stanton laughed, but he had n't more'n got out of sight before old Seward, he came along; and he's almost always smoking."

"Did he halt Seward?"

"You bet! He pointed his frog-sticker at him, and yelled, 'You put out dot cigar!'"

"'O, I guess not,' said Seward, and he was going right along; but he had to halt and stand still, and no kind of explanation was

worth a cent. Out it had to go before he could pass the gate."

"Stanton and Seward both!" I exclaimed, and the bronze horse gave another curvet, as if he perfectly understood the portfolios of state and war, but the cavalryman again suppressed his chuckling and his spirited beast, and went on.

"That is n't all, though. Seward got away without being prodded, but a few minutes later along came old Ben Butler, as large as life; and he was swinging right in, but he was n't in his major-general's uniform. Looked like a civilian, you know. 'Halt! You puts out dot cigar!' shouts Germany, and Ben halted.

"'Are those your orders?' he asked.

"'Dose is my orters! Put out dot cigar!' The frog-sticker was pointing straight at him, and old Ben threw his cigar away over the fence.

"'Orders are orders, and they must be obeyed. There it goes,' he said, and on he went. You ought to have been here as I was, and seen and heard it."

He had more to say, to bring out all the peculiar personalities and behavior of the three distinguished victims of military authority unnecessarily enforced, and then he wheeled

away to his post of duty, while the volunteer and his sabre bayonet bravely held the narrow gate against all comers.

The joke was altogether too good to keep, but it was hardly the correct thing to intrude upon the President's privacy at that hour. It was lucky that the door between his room and Mr. Nicolay's was open so that I could see him, all alone, writing something at his desk. Something important, perhaps, for he lifted his head from it with a clouded face when I spoke to him. I had a curious idea, however, that I was doing him good while I told my story, and at the end of it he was laughing merrily.

"Seward!" he said. "And Stanton! And old Ben! Well, well! I guess I'd better send for the officer on duty, whoever he is, and tell him to let up a little. The orders against smoking don't include this part of the camp."

The captain of the company on guard was sent for, and he came. He was a good-looking young fellow, and I had a perception that only his deep respect for the President kept down, or back, the broad grin that began upon his face. He received the direct orders given him by the commander-in-chief, and bowed his way out. Perhaps he was not at all sorry to have such an incident to tell of in his after days.

My own work called me to my loaded table, and there was the end of the matter, except that only a few days later all the formal and useless guard-mounting and patrol duty was dispensed with. It was not at all to the taste of Mr. Lincoln. He objected strenuously to military surroundings and to "fuss and feathers" of every description. Formalism burdened him.

Long years afterward, I was again in Washington, and was, one summer evening, the guest of a pleasant private family. Its older and younger members were recalling incidents of the war, and for my contribution I told the story of the German sentry at the White House gate. Somewhat quiet until then, and sitting in a corner, had been a bearded young fellow, who listened and laughed until the end; and then he said, "I guess you don't remember me." He had been introduced to me as a nephew of the lady of the house; but I could say, "No, I don't think we have ever met before."

"Yes, we have!" he replied, with another outburst of fun. "I was the cavalryman! We've all heard that story before. I just wanted to know, though, what Lincoln said about it."

He had other points to add, and perhaps

there is not now any very great value attaching to it, but we do owe to President Lincoln something for his persistent preservation of the supremacy of the civil authority over any and every development of militarism. There may yet come another national occasion when his example may profitably be referred to.



The Messenger to the President



ONE of the many curious demands made upon Mr. Lincoln by his critics during the war was omniscience. It was his duty to see and hear everything, no matter how far away, and then to act upon his perfect information in accordance with the course of future events. Something like the same idea has crept into the work of later commentators upon his administration.

He was a broad-minded and subtle analyst and judge of whatever information came to him, and that he was so rarely misled affords us a striking, and all but marvellous, presentation of his peculiar genius. The central fact remains, however, that the great mass of his information, of whatever kind, reached him through official channels. Every despatch from the armies or the fleets, all correspondence upon either civil or military affairs, was sure to be tinged, more or less, by the feelings, opinions, or interests of individuals. Each person communicating with him might be honest, honorable, even capable; but each was

an individual man, not all-wise nor all-knowing.

Constitutionally as well as officially Mr. Lincoln was keenly eager to obtain the exact truth in any case, and it sometimes came to him through by and forbidden paths. One of these paths began at a roadside in the rear of the Army of the Potomac, nearly at the close of the hard fighting in what is best known as the second battle of Bull Run. It will serve sufficiently well as an illustration.

A loud voice called out, in a tone that indicated surprise, "What! are you here, Harry?"

"Yes, general," came back from the roadside. "I'm helping take care of the wounded. Secretary Chase sent me over with a lot of us treasury clerks as soon as he heard that the battle was going on."

"My boy," sharply exclaimed the general, "you are just the man I want! Your brother is one of Lincoln's private secretaries. He can get in a message to the President that no army officer could carry. It wouldn't go straight in at once if he did carry it. You come along with me."

A few yards away from the spot where he had reined in his horse, a brace of army surgeons were busily at work among a ghastly

gathering of shot-shattered soldiers, brought in from the last battle-field. The general was a fine-looking man, but his face wore now an almost broken-hearted expression, mingled with something that told of anger as well as disappointment. He might well be feeling deeply, for he was aware of the net results of that day's collision with the Confederate forces under General Lee. Hardly as much was yet known by the Union army itself, except its more badly beaten corps. In the far distance at this hour cannon were still sounding. Reserves and re-enforcements were still moving toward the front, while all that "front" was rushing back discomfited, disordered, nearly ruined.

The Union forces had everywhere fought well, heroically. If any blame for the disaster belonged anywhere, it did not belong to the soldiers. No man could yet say, decisively, upon whose shoulders it should be laid. To this day the controversy concerning this point may fairly be regarded as unsettled, long and thorough as has been the examination.

The corps-commander, for such was the general's rank, rode slowly along with Harry trudging at the side of his horse.

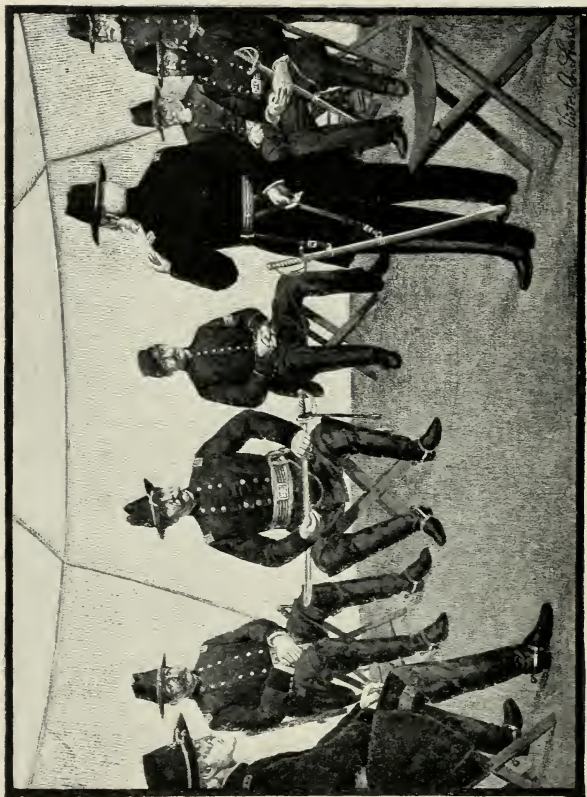
"You are something of a dandy, Harry,"

he remarked ; " but you don't look much like one just now."

" It's been awful!" was all that his young friend could reply ; for he had been at his terrible work through many hours, and his hands and clothes, and even his face, bore red tokens of its character. After that they went on for a little distance in silence, and then the general halted, pointing forward.

" There's the tent," he said. " It will not be a council of war. Nothing of the kind has been formally summoned. No report of this meeting will ever be made officially, but I have sent for the men I want the President to hear from. Some know it, and some do not. You will come in and sit down by me. Take no written notes. That would n't do. Take every man's name. Hear every word that is said, questions and answers. Then go and tell Abraham Lincoln precisely what you have heard, no more, no less. I want him to know the exact truth and the exact feeling of the best officers in this army."

He gave his own views very fully and freely to begin with. It appeared, also, that Harry, who held a high position under the secretary of the treasury, had won an exceptional reputation for the accuracy and retentiveness of his memory.



Drawn by Victor A. Searles.

IT COULD NOT BE CALLED A COUNCIL OF WAR.

These were the very dark days of the Civil War, after the failure of the Peninsular campaign. This particular day seemed to grow darker every minute after the great marquee tent of the commanding general was reached. There appeared to be great excitement all around, and many were coming and going. Officers and orderlies carrying despatches rode to and fro at full gallop. In the tent itself no one was likely to note or care for the presence of one youth more, seeming to be there in attendance upon a corps-commander. Several of these and of other officers of high rank arrived, and one of them in particular expressed himself forcibly concerning the military situation before he dismounted from his horse.

It could not be called a council of war. It was not even a debating society. It was an altogether informal coming together of a number of angry critics, leaders of a defeated army, it might be, but as resolute and as capable as ever. In such a gathering they could and did say many things which would not have been inserted, even by themselves, in any despatch to the war department. Perhaps one or two of them spoke none the less freely because of an intimation that they were transmitting their best opinions to the commander-in-chief, the President.

Harry sat and listened, his pale face glowing with excitement or growing paler with grief as he learned the sad extent of the disasters, the details of which were unfolded.

"Get out, now," said his friend, at last. "Can you remember?"

"I can repeat every word," said Harry decidedly. "I shall not miss any part of it. But how on earth am I to get to Washington? There is n't a horse to be had."

"I'll attend to that," replied the general, glancing up the road. "There's one yonder. Horse enough to carry bad news."

An army wagon had broken down at the roadside, its damaged front wheel stuck in a ditch, and its driver had unhitched his three spans of mules.

The general ordered him to put a bridle upon one of these, but there was no saddle to be had. A blanket was strapped on instead, and the important messenger's steed was ready.

"Take that order to the quartermaster at Alexandria," said the general. "He will send you to Washington on a special boat. The President will have plenty of despatches before you get there, but none like yours for a day or two. They are breaking the news of this thing a little too gently."

Away went Harry, and his mule was really

a good one, glad, perhaps, to have a free run with no army wagon behind him.

Dark, dark, dark was that ride of the young messenger, and his heart was the heaviest thing carried by his willing mule. He had sights to see as he went. Wounded men on stretchers, ambulances, guns, disordered detachments, confusion, the wrecks of any great battle, whether lost or won.

The dead on each side were thousands, the wounded were thousands more, and the Confederate forces themselves had been badly shattered. How he found the needful authority in Alexandria, Harry afterwards hardly knew, for he hunted him up in a kind of apparent chaos that was really nothing more than the customary rush and whirl of vast military movements.

At last, nevertheless, a steam-tug was bearing him swiftly up the Potomac toward Washington, and she seemed to him to have no other passenger than the courier of the last battle.

The next morning the usual routine of work was but just beginning in the Executive Mansion. Miscellaneous visitors were not yet admitted, but the President was in his room, and he was alone. The secretary in charge of the White House correspondence was sitting

behind his table in the northeast room, busily opening and reading numberless letters, when the door in front of him swung open, and an extraordinary, uncomely, disorderly shape strode hastily to his very elbow. Mud, blood, torn clothes, pallor, a battered hat,—some vagabond who had broken in past the door-keeper.

“Bill! I must see the President right away! I’m from the battle!”

“Harry? Is this you? I did n’t know you! What is it?”

“I must n’t tell you, nor anybody but Mr. Lincoln. It’s private news for him ——”

“Stand still a moment.”

Up sprung the secretary, and hastened across the hall into the President’s room. Bending gloomily over a pile of despatches, Mr. Lincoln at first hardly turned his head when spoken to; but he listened, bending even lower for a moment, as if some burden had suddenly grown heavier.

“Bring your brother right in!”

Not another word spoken, only a knitting of the dark brows and a deepening of the deep wrinkles.

A minute more, and Harry was alone with the commander-in-chief; the man who always found it so very difficult to obtain exact infor-

mation that he felt at times as if he was walking on in the dark.

Half an hour or more went by,—it seemed much longer,—and the bell over the secretary's table summoned him to Mr. Lincoln's room.

"Take your brother to Stanton. Take this card, and he will see you at once. He must know this instantly. It is of vast importance."

"Come on, Bill," whispered Harry. "I'm almost dead, but I can stand it through."

As they walked along together, out of the White House and toward the War Department, the messenger gave his brother a sufficiently full account of himself, and of his doings, but not of the utterances of the several division commanders who had composed the corps and informal council or army conference.

Stanton's office was reached, and the gruff secretary of war put aside a number of brilliant uniforms to take the grimy courier into his private room, where none but he could hear. An hour went by, and out he came with Harry. "Stoddard," he said, "not a word to anybody; but your brother must see Halleck. It lets new light into the whole affair. He has done it well."

A clerk led the way, and General Halleck in turn put aside all other affairs to listen and question carefully. He was at that time the

trusted and almost supreme military adviser of the administration; and he, too, may at times have been puzzled by conflicting reports from here and there. He was a calm, scholarly-looking man, of exceedingly firm nerves, a scientific general rather than a leader in the field. All the more, for that reason, was he well fitted for the vastly important post to which he had been appointed. His inquiries in the present case were thorough, and consumed much time; but before they were ended Lincoln was with Stanton, and Halleck was sent for.

"What's next, Harry?" asked his brother.

"Next? Why, I must get a bath and something to eat. Then I must go to bed. I must n't say a word to a living soul about this matter, though. You must n't, either," said the messenger.

"I?" almost laughed the secretary. "Humph! My special business, year in and year out, is keeping my mouth shut and forgetting things. About a good many matters I must forget as long as I live. There is going to be a sharp inquiry over this defeat, though. It should have been a victory. Our men fought splendidly."

"So they did," groaned Harry. "I never want to see a battle-field again, Bill. I wish

I could forget. There's nothing else so awful. The wounded are worse to see than the dead. I wish the war were over."

He slowly walked away, faint and sick. The secretary hurried back to his post of duty. Lincoln returned to his White House room. There were torrents of despatches and reports after that, but the best generals in the Army of the Potomac had already sent their unpruned opinions to the President. They had, for the greater part, unwittingly sent them by an army mule, carrying Secretary Chase's confidential clerk. It has been said, "A bird of the air shall carry the voice"; and so he might, if he were sitting in the tent corner while the matter was undergoing altogether free discussion, and if then he could find any means of carrying it to Mr. Lincoln himself.



THERE have been crises in our national history when it has seemed that too great a concentration of power in the hands of a popular army leader threatened to render the civil authority subordinate. From each of these perils as it came we have been delivered by the stubborn jealousy of our successive Congresses and also by the wisdom and unselfish patriotism of individual statesmen. To George Washington himself we owe our first and greatest debt, and the record of what he did and how he did it is an interesting study. At the close of the Civil War there were months of disorder and confusion during which it was well for the integrity of our institutions that the power concentrated was in the hands of Ulysses S. Grant. A weaker or a more ambitious man might then have done irreparable mischief. Minor instances occurring between these indicated dates could hardly be presented without too extended an historical explanation.

The American people, like all others, has exhibited a strong tendency to glorify military success, and has now and then manufactured its heroes of the moment out of somewhat defective materials. There have been American demigods that melted away like so many snow images as soon as they were placed out under the clear sunshine.

Probably there will always be occasional clashings between the habitual dictatorship of military authority and the slower, law-bound methods of the civil power. The latter may even operate detrimentally under certain circumstances, but we have wisely decided that we will endure any such detriment rather than run the risks involved in a consent to avoid it by giving even temporary or incidental supremacy to any army leader.

We formulate our expression of this decision by making the President of the United States the commander-in-chief of the army and navy, although he may not know enough of war to drill a corporal's guard or of seamanship to row a boat. He is, of course, supposed to have his professional advisers, but these are not to be his directors. Each of our chief magistrates in turn has distinguished himself by the wisdom and moderation with which he has exercised this tremendous prerogative. In

it, however, hardly hidden at all is the unquestionably dictatorial authority which was so freely exercised by Abraham Lincoln.

Of him it is also recorded, on the declarations of General Grant and others, that he did not meddle with actual operations of armies and commanders in the field. Each general intrusted with the direction of a campaign was sustained to the uttermost by the President, and was left altogether unhampered by the civil authority to which he was nevertheless held responsible for his successes or his defeats. The few collisions which at any time occurred were brought about by some semblances of political action outside of affairs properly military, on the part of officers holding important commands.

The first notable clashing of this kind was between the President and General Fremont, when that overhasty patriot assumed to exercise in the West functions which did not lawfully belong to him.

Another, apparently more dangerous, marked the military and civil career of Gen. George B. McClellan. There could be no question of either the ability or the patriotism of that magnificently equipped military scholar. President Lincoln himself once said to me concerning him, in reply to a question

of my own: "Well, Stoddard, I will say it; for organizing an army, for preparing an army for the field, for fighting a defensive campaign, I will back General McClellan against any general of modern times. I don't know but of ancient times, either. But I begin to believe that he will never get ready to go forward."

That was said while the Army of the Potomac was wasting away uselessly in its camps and forts among the Virginia hills south of Washington, and while its commanding general was developing his views upon the political aspects of the war.

After that came the long agony of the painfully protracted and disastrous "Peninsular campaign," from which the army at last returned to very much its old places south of the Potomac and the capital. With it came its exceedingly popular general, and there was an unconcealed antagonism between him and Mr. Lincoln, not only upon questions which were political rather than military, but also upon others, the solution whereof actually did include the constitutional provision and the supreme direction of all the forces of the nation.

The general once more had a temporary residence in Washington, not many minutes' walk from the Executive Mansion. Here, in

my northeast room, I was sitting one evening, deeply absorbed in my work. So interested had I become in an epistle of unusual importance that I was entirely unaware of anybody else coming in or going out, until a low, weary-sounding voice at my elbow said to me: "Leave that, and come with me. I am going over to McClellan's house." Not another word was uttered. I arose in silence, picked up my hat, and walked out of the house with him. There was that in his manner which forbade question or remark. I was aware of having some such feeling as a man may have when he is looking at a very black thundercloud with an idea that a stormy gust is in it. Thunder and lightning sometimes come out of such clouds, you know, and the tallest trees go down suddenly. Even army tents, big ones, might be blown away by one of those thunder-gusts.

European etiquette, a very important bit of governmental machinery, after its kind, might have forbidden the commander-in-chief to run over in this manner to ask questions of a subordinate. It was, to a European diplomatic mind, something like an open confession of weakness. The inferior should have been sent for, not visited. Mr. Lincoln knew hardly anything about etiquette or diplomacy. He had had some experience with an axe, however,

and he could drive in the edge of one to the very eye.

Not one word did he speak to me, that I can remember, as we walked along. He was accompanied, as may be seen, by his brilliant official staff, as became a commander-in-chief on his way to order the movements of armies and to determine the political future of the republic.

The house was reached; the door-bell was rung; and we were admitted. We were ushered into an ample and elegantly furnished drawing-room. Mr. Lincoln drew a chair to a place near the centre-table, and sat down with his face toward the doorway from the hall. I found a seat somewhat more in the background, or on the other side of the table. I was like a spectator in a theatre, waiting for the curtain to rise; but I was wrong about that, for the first act had begun.

Time enough was to be given for the President to collect his thoughts and mature his purposes after his arrival was announced to the commander of the Army of the Potomac. Very possibly that brilliant and accomplished leader had just then in hand important army matters. If so, due attention must indeed be accorded to them, and a mere civilian might well wait.

Minutes went by, and I was conscious that the hot blood of angry indignation was tingling all over me. My cheeks seemed on fire, and my lips were trembling; but Mr. Lincoln sat with a smile growing grimly on his face, and the thundercloud had entirely disappeared.

There came a sound of feet on the stairs in the hallway and a rattle of clattering metal as if somebody's blade were loose in its scabbard and banged against a baluster. Then followed a rushing entrance of elegant men in fine uniforms, epauleted, startling; and I took note that the President had on a seedy black cutaway coat. No epaulets. No sword. No grandeur. Nevertheless, he seemed to me a number of yards taller than was either the general or the two members of his staff, General Marcy and another, who came in with him.

Was there any apology made for keeping the President waiting? Not a word, for Mr. Lincoln almost instantly asked a question which sent all other subjects of conversation, as it were, to the tombs of the Capulets. It must be said for General McClellan and his personal movements that he seemed the very impersonation of dash, vigor, firmness, decision. He had a vast amount of what is called personal magnetism. He now took a

seat with a singular air of being not only at home, but altogether the master of the situation, and again I felt my hot blood mounting. I was entirely cured by staring at Mr. Lincoln ; for that strange, phenomenal smile of his was deepening. Never mind, now, what were the subjects which were brought forward for discussion, or, rather, as it proved, for the patiently reached declaration of Mr. Lincoln's final decision. I was not there as a reporter, but only as the President's magnificent staff, in a gray sack suit, unsashed, unsworded.

The President had at the first arisen to greet politely the army men, as they came in to call upon him in what had suddenly changed, somehow, into a drawing-room of his own. He was evidently even pleased to see them, and was glad that they had taken the trouble to come down-stairs and learn from his own lips what orders he might have to give them.

All of that, however, was said by his manner only, and not at all by words. The general felt, comprehended, and resented instantly. He was himself a perfect master of conversational warfare. The slow, guarded, thoughtful exchange of brief sentences which followed became wonderfully interesting. It was a great wrestling-match, so to speak, between two extraordinary athletes.

There could be no question of the general's superiority in training, experience, all manner of information relating to military affairs. Mr. Lincoln admitted it, skilfully, deferentially, and then that fact disappeared from the arena. As he himself once remarked, "Some kinds of powder can't be burnt but once."

General McClellan had great will power, and he hardly tried to conceal his sense of the pyramidal strength of his official and political position. Mr. Lincoln did not dispute it at all, and he listened quite respectfully to a very few deprecatory remarks made by General Marcy and the accompanying colonel, whoever he was. They also were respectfully aware of the superiority, at such a crisis, of the military authority over the absurdly elevated civil power.

One listening could not but begin to see beyond that drawing-room theatre and its wrestlers. Not only awful battles, extended war operations, but political agitations also and future presidential elections, might be prophetically discerned, taking dim shapes in a background that was very near indeed. The future of the country, North and South, and in immediate particular, the policy, the direction, and the fate of the Lincoln administration, were being apparently wrestled for. So it appeared to one who saw and heard as a critical spec-

tator, but so it was not, in reality. The room became more and more fully occupied by the incomparably stronger individuality of the tall, Titanic athlete to whom the victory was assured from the beginning. By no possibility could Mr. Lincoln have been overcome, and he carried point after point without the slightest appearance of making an effort.

The general grew more and more deferentially courteous, less and less declaratory of his idea that the supreme command belonged to him. All manner of politics drifted out of sight, and only the coming movements of the several armies remained, to be left to him, skilfully, by Mr. Lincoln, after their nature, in outline, had been pretty fully set forth and agreed upon.

The long interview, so extraordinary, so interesting, so important, came to an end at last. The colonel had gone to other duties long since, and only General McClellan and General Marcy remained. They were both unusually fine-looking men, and they bowed with grace and dignity as the civil power of the United States walked out of the house every whit as supreme as ever.

What did I do?

Why, I had entirely recovered my unfortunate temper, and I walked along with Mr.

Lincoln, looking up to him every now and then as if he were an exceedingly tall man. I think he laughed aloud once or twice; but he did not



"EVERY WHIT AS SUPREME AS EVER."

tell me why, and I did not go back to my work again that night, for the hour was late when the commander-in-chief and his staff re-entered the Executive Mansion.



BEYOND a doubt, the people of the United States, learned or unlearned, are exceedingly critical. A very considerable part of them may also be described as fastidious. The number, variety, and character of our periodicals, with their comparative prosperities, present all the information necessary upon this point. Any one interested in the study of it, however, may discover somewhat more upon close investigation. Here and there, not by any means too frequently, he will find the marvel of a joke, a poem, an utterance of patriotism or of statesmanship, which has been printed and reprinted in almost every journal, large or small.

In every case the matter so perpetually reappearing has been something brief, simple; often it is plain even to homeliness. These are the things which pass the criticism of the masses, whatever opinion concerning them may be entertained by the fastidious minority. Now and then, even to this day, there have been utterances of this sort, sure to reach the

minds and stir the hearts of the people, which for some reason call out the remark, "That reminds one of Abraham Lincoln." That this is so illustrates well the popular memory and thought which treasures yet his peculiar faculty for forcible expression.

How, then, did he attain and how did he exercise his undeniable power in the exact uses of words and phrases? Was he in the habit of striking off at random, like sparks from flint and steel, the fiery utterances which kindled instantly any combustible material in the minds and hearts of all who heard or read? Not so. He had much in his mind which was ready at any moment when demanded, and he could give an answer promptly enough and vigorously. It is not too much to say, however, that he never wrote or said anything intended by him to be of general effect and value without permitting it to take form slowly in his heart and brain in long processes of preparation.

It would be interesting in this connection to know the stages of the elaboration of his brief, seemingly almost spontaneous, but imperishable, Gettysburg speech. A close analysis of its perfect sentences proves that it is a formulation of thoughts and feelings which belonged to the inner life of the speaker. It was there-

fore something like a jewel already polished that he took out of its casket and set forever in the memories of his countrymen. It is related of him that his great Springfield speech in 1858, in which occurs the then tremendous declaration, "A house divided against itself cannot stand; I do not believe this government can endure permanently, half slave and half free," was written a scrap at a time, day after day, on odds and ends of waste paper, old letter-backs, envelopes, and the like. These at last were collected and consolidated like the stones and timbers of a new building, the architect fitting them well together and making the structure strong rather than elegant. Strenuous objection to the delivery of it was made by a number of his badly frightened friends.

Something like this is true of the slow preparation of his Cooper Institute speech, and of his inaugural addresses. Conscientious care and long forethought with reference to acts as well as to forms of speech created in the minds of many observers an erroneous impression of slowness or hesitation; but he could strike with fiery rapidity whenever an occasion called for promptness, and it was not by any means easy to take him unawares.

Were you ever at any time suddenly transformed into a hundred millions of men and

women? No? Well, I was once. Or, rather, I was changed into an actor, and was compelled to pose as the living representative of at least that number of people upon a stage which had no footlights. It was nothing, in fact, but a chair at one side of the long "cabinet-meeting table" in the President's room at the White House in the summer of 1863. Late one evening, after all others had left the business part of the house, I was in Mr. Nicolay's room, for some now-forgotten reason, when Mr. Lincoln came to the door of it with some sheets of foolscap paper in his hand.

"Stoddard," he said, "come in here. I've been writing something, and I want to read it to somebody."

He turned round and went into his own room, going over to the opposite side of the long table. Here he seated himself, pen in hand, his manuscript before him; and I was dimly aware of an idea that I was altogether and merely "somebody."

"I can always get a better idea of anything," he said, "after I've heard it read and know how it sounds."

I began then to get another and very different conception of my position. He was about to listen on behalf of his audience of a hundred million, and to study the effect upon

them, not me. He was intending to enter into their minds, and to weigh and judge with them the force and meaning of his utterances. That is, Mr. Lincoln himself, by the vast and subtle outreaching of his imagination, was for the hour transformed into an almost world-wide audience, giving its verdict, sentence by sentence, upon a very memorable state paper.

It was the long, yet wonderfully condensed, letter addressed to whom it might concern, through Hon. James C. Conkling, of Springfield, Ill., August 26, 1863. In this letter the President summed up the results of the war to that date, and defended with caustic power the policy of arming black soldiers for the defence of their newly acquired freedom. Besides this, it was a defence of the Emancipation Proclamation itself, then about a year old, and still dependent for its full and final effect upon the outcome of the war. To the minds of many men, of the North as well as of the South, this result was still a matter of great uncertainty. Half of America and almost all of French or English-speaking Europe believed that the Confederacy would succeed, after all, in establishing an independent nationality. The Germanic peoples generally held an opposite view, and were free purchasers of our national six-per-cent bonds. Even they, how-

ever, were much in need of reassurance, and it was in this manner to be given them. The discontented, discouraged, or overcritical citizens of Illinois who had addressed their complaints to the President through Mr. Conkling were to serve an exceedingly important purpose of state.

The letter itself shows, on examination, that first in importance of all who were to read it, to the mind of its author, were the true-hearted, self-sacrificing people who were sustaining him. He knew that their saddened eyes were in those days continually turned toward him as if they were waiting, longing, hoping, that he might have something good to tell them.

Not less was the value of that letter to the soldiers in their camps and the sailors on the ships and gunboats. It was well for the commander-in-chief, without seeming to address them at all, to give them an encouraging outline and a better understanding of the tremendous work which they had already accomplished.

Just behind all these was the population of the Confederacy itself, or all that part of it which should by any means obtain a reading of the letter. It is now well known that they did, to a large proportion, obtain and read not

only this, but many other of his public and private utterances. So deep was the effect thus produced upon them that at the close of the war they were already prepared to regard him as their well-known friend and as their especial security for good treatment in the hour of their helplessness.

After the letter was printed, nevertheless, one would have supposed that its manner rather than its matter was of the greatest importance. The criticisms made upon it by the British journals which reprinted or did not reprint it, in whole or in part, were curiously largely of a literary character, as if it should have been prepared, or at least modified, smoothed, softened, to suit transatlantic tastes and prejudices. Even these critics, however, and others not so far away, revealed in their varied condemnations the fact that Mr. Lincoln had somehow accomplished his purpose, so far as they were concerned.

His addressed American complainers were crushed out altogether, and it was only natural that a large number of them took refuge in a high-toned denunciation of his false rhetoric. "Read this," they said contemptuously. "What are we to think of such utter frivolity in dealing with such terribly dark and dreadful circumstances? Mr. Lincoln

ought at least to have had the good taste to strike out this ridiculous passage." The part which they made the most of read as follows: "Nor must Uncle Sam's web-feet be forgotten. At all the watery margins they have been present, not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow and muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been and made their tracks."

Slowly, thoughtfully, listening to the sound of his own voice, the President read his letter through to the very end, his face changing its expression in remarkable accord with the spirit and force of each successive paragraph. My own interest, and with it my listening power, grew intense, and I was really something more than a theatrical dummy; for I, too, was listening for others.

"Now," he said, as he threw the last of the sheets of paper upon the table and looked smilingly across at me, "what do you think of it?"

As an original anti-slavery man and as a "war Republican," I had only admiration and enthusiasm to express, and I made an effort to express them; but his keen eye saw that I had something else on my mind:

"Out with it!" he said. "If you have any

criticism to make, make it; I'd like to know what it is."

It required much courage and firmness to comply, but I came up to the mark bravely. "Well, Mr. Lincoln, just in one place. Where you speak of Uncle Sam's web-feet ——"



"WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT?"

A ringing laugh interrupted me. "Not exactly the thing, eh? I thought you'd point at that. I won't strike it out, though. The plain people will like it. It's just what I mean to say."

I went back to my own room, and thought the matter over; and it was not long before

I began to understand what he meant to say. Somehow or other, writing precisely as he did write, he had managed to express a terrific, biting, withering scorn for all false patriotism and its many hypocrisies, at the same time when he conveyed to other minds, from his own, the cheerfulness of a growing and well-grounded trust that the final victory of the national cause was already assured. In its immediate effect that letter was like the winning of a great battle, won for the Union armies by their commander-in-chief, sitting alone at his old-fashioned writing-desk by the southerly window of the White House.



SOMEBODY has asked the question, "Did President Lincoln ever actually complain of being tired physically?" Somebody else has asserted that he was never seen to lie down in the daytime. There are not many persons now living who can testify accurately with reference to these very unimportant matters of personal history. In Mr. Lincoln's earlier day he was a remarkable pedestrian. He was also a good boxer, and was regarded as an all but unconquerable wrestler. It is recorded that he could lift over a half-ton avoirdupois. A man who could split rails all day and then read law all the evening afterward was assuredly a phenomenon of bodily endurance. In his many political campaigns his feats of continuous travelling and oratory have probably not been surpassed by the similar performances of any other man.

It was after he became president of the United States that his toughness of both bodily and mental fibre received its severest testing.

From the hour of his arrival in Washington in 1861 the great burden of his responsibilities, not to be estimated by ton weights, rested upon his heart and brain rather than upon his corporeal shoulders. It was of this load that he spoke to a friend when he complained that it was slowly killing him. He was dying by inches internally, while his sinews were as good as ever.

The continually arriving swarms of office-seekers were very little more than so many flies, some of them gadflies, to be endured philosophically and brushed away. They were time-wasters. His habits of all sorts were as regular as clockwork. The mere routine duties of the executive office began for him as soon as he was out of bed. He was often at work at his desk before breakfast. It may also be said that his toils continued, with but little interruption or relaxation, until he went to bed again; and this was often at a late hour. Moreover, there may have been, before any great battle or after a great defeat, a night of sleeplessness when brain and heart worked on and when the body itself was unable to rest very well.

As to his ever lying down in the daytime, I can distinctly remember a case in point. There was one particular occasion when Mr. Lincoln

did lie down and in the forenoon. That he did so may have been in part because he was tired and the day was warm, but it was much more for an altogether different reason.

In the spring of 1864 a man by the name of Grant, already distinguished for remarkable efficiency in the West, was appointed to the command of all the land forces of the United States. Up to the date of his appointment he and Mr. Lincoln had not met, and their personal acquaintanceship began under somewhat difficult circumstances. It is true that they had corresponded by mail and telegraph, but each was as yet a good deal of a stranger to the other.

At the time of General Grant's arrival in Washington, to assume especially the direction of the Army of the Potomac, I was in bed with the typhoid fever. Weeks passed before I was able to return to my desk at the White House. When at last my convalescence reached the stage for walking about, I chose a Sunday morning for my first visit, not caring to encounter the work-day throngs of all sorts. My latch-key let me into the house, and I walked around the lower floor, from room to room, without meeting anybody in particular. Then I climbed the stairs, and went to my own, the northeast room. I found my table heaped

with accumulated papers, which promised superabundance of work for me as soon as I should be able to get at it; and I was glad to turn away. Across the hall was Mr. Nicolay's room, but neither he nor Colonel Hay was there.

The hall door of the President's room was open, and I sauntered over toward it. I can remember that I was feeling blue and out of sorts, besides being nervously anxious about the political and military situation. I looked in; and there was Mr. Lincoln stretched out at full length upon the sofa, his hands folded over the top of his head. Two cushions lifted his shoulders, and assisted in giving him a comfortable, lounging position. There was a broad smile upon his face like contentment, and he only raised his head a little to speak to me, bidding me come in. I went and brought a chair to the sofa so that I could sit down facing him. Very kind, very encouraging were his inquiries about my illness and his advice concerning needful prudence. He had also instructions to give, and there were varied topics for conversation; but I had a special inquiry in my mind, and I engineered an opportunity for making it.

"Now, Mr. Lincoln," I said, "what sort of a man is Grant? I've never seen him. He

has taken hold here while I have been laid up. What do you think of him?"

Up came the President, turning over and leaning upon an elbow; and he laughed one of his long, peculiar, silent laughs before he replied: "Well, Stoddard, I hardly know what to think of him altogether. He's the quietest little fellow I ever saw."

"How is that?" I persisted.

"Why, he makes the least fuss of any man you ever knew. I believe two or three times he has been in this room a minute or so before I knew he was here. It's about so all around. The only evidence you have that he's in any place is that he makes things *git*! Wherever he is, things move!"

He was growing very much in earnest, and there was something like a glow upon his sallow, deeply marked countenance. There were several other remarks made, or questions and answers, which I cannot now recall; but my main point was reached at last.

"But how about Grant's generalship?" I ventured to inquire. "Is he going to be *the* man?"

As all are aware, that tremendous question had been asked by the President and by the nation of several successive commanders, and the responses had not been altogether satisfac-

tory. Mr. Lincoln was now half sitting up, and he emphasized his reply with his long up-lifted forefinger.

"Stoddard, Grant is the first general I've had. He's a general!"



"GRANT IS THE FIRST GENERAL I'VE HAD."

"How do you mean, Mr. Lincoln?"

"Well, I'll tell you what I mean. You know how it's been with all the rest. As soon as I put a man in command of the army, he'd come to me with a plan of a campaign, and about as much as say, 'Now, I don't believe I can do it; but, if you say so, I'll try it on,' and so put the

responsibility of success or failure upon me. They all wanted me to be the general. Now, it is n't so with Grant. He has n't told me what his plans are. I don't know, and I don't want to know. I'm glad to find a man that can go ahead without me."

I wanted to hear as much more as I could, and what I said next I don't know, but it nettled him. It made him sit up on the sofa and talk right at me.

"You see, Stoddard, when any of the rest set out on a campaign, they'd look over matters and pick out some one thing they were short of, and they knew I could n't give 'em, and tell me they could n't hope to win unless they had it; and it was most generally cavalry."

Perhaps it was an absurd memory connected with past impossible army requisitions that made him pause and laugh so heartily, and he went on: "Now, when Grant took hold, I was waiting to see what his pet impossibility would be; and I reckoned it would be cavalry, as a matter of course, for we had n't horses enough to mount even what men we had. There were fifteen thousand, or thereabouts, up at Harper's Ferry, and no horses to put them on. Well, the other day Grant sends to me about those very men, just as I expected; but what he wanted to know was whether he

should make infantry of 'em, or disband 'em. He did n't ask impossibilities of me, and he's the first general I've had that did n't."

It was plain enough, therefore, why he was lying down so cheerfully that sunny Sunday morning. No doubt he was tired, internally, perhaps externally; but there was not any look of weariness upon his face. He would have been ready for and equal to any amount of mere bodily exertion. It was a sense of relief which had put him on the sofa. Somebody else was playing the part of Atlas for him, at last. He had discovered another pair of shoulders as strong as his own, and he believed that for military burdens they were stronger. He was not the only man who has found all his muscles and nerves relax under the grateful breath of deliverance.

Long years afterward the substance of this conversation was repeated to Grant himself. It was after the close of his second presidential term. Already the question of Lincoln's interference with army management had been the subject of extended and acrimonious discussion. The general's commentary upon Mr. Lincoln's somewhat humorous declaration covering his own case as well as the careers of his less successful predecessors was exceedingly emphatic. Never, he said, at any time had the

President interfered with him. Always he had given unstinted, unquestioning support.

The Sunday morning nap of the tired chief magistrate and commander-in-chief was therefore a curious result and index of a great and welcome change which had come. He had discovered a genuinely great general.





“**N**OW! I want to hear it all. Tell it as rapidly as you can. Where did you go, and what did you learn?”

There was no other person in the President's office at the White House. He was sitting in a chair near the sofa, with a great upright rack of roller war-maps behind him. He had pointed me to a chair in front of him, and I sat down to make my report of affairs in the Southwest. The hall outside was crowded with people of all sorts and ranks, impatiently awaiting their turns to come in; and they seemed to give a kind of emphasis to his demand for conciseness. Nevertheless, I had something to tell that he was determined to hear before he would attend to anybody else.

“I went straight from here to St. Louis,” I replied. “Then down the Mississippi to Memphis. From there I went up the White River to Duval's Bluff, and across country to Little Rock. I finished there, and went down the Arkansas River and up the Mississippi again.

I went everywhere and talked with everybody, army men and civilians."

"First, then, how about General Washburn and Memphis and West Tennessee. Is he all right?"

"Things there are all you could ask for, as to administration;" and I was glad—for I liked Washburn—to be able to give a thoroughly good report of that important post and district, without any flaws or faultfinding. The President also expressed great satisfaction, for evil tongues had been busy.

"Now for Arkansas," said he. "How about the charges against General Steele?"

His face had put on an unusually dark and anxious look, and he was silently tapping the floor with one foot.

"They are all nonsense!" I said with some energy. "There is n't a dishonest hair in his head. He can't be held responsible, though, for all that's going on in his department."

"Of course not," said Mr. Lincoln, "but what is the real truth about the corn-contract frauds?"

"I guess I'll have to tell you just how that is, Mr. Lincoln. The contractors did make a great deal of money, but the government did n't lose any."

"I don't see how that can be," he interrupted

me, his face clouding more angrily. "I'm glad about Fred Steele, though. I always liked him. I like his brother, too, that's here in Congress. Finish your story about that corn. How was it?"

"Well," I responded, "the way of it was this: Just before we marched in the planters of the Arkansas River bottom-lands didn't care to put in any cotton. They had no market for it, you know. The Confederate army and other folks were sure to need corn, though; and so all that tremendous stretch of country, best land in the world, was planted in corn. The crops came up fine. Sixty to a hundred bushels the acre, maybe. Then our troops came in, and the Confederate army marched away. So did most of the planters; and the colored people took to their heels, every which way. There was the corn, and nobody to gather it. It wasn't the property of the Confederate government, so far as anybody knew; and there was a great deal more of it than General Steele's army needed. So the contractors came in to prevent all those magnificent crops from being wasted. It pained them to think of so much good corn rotting in the field. They had all the contracts for supplying the Army of the Cumberland, the Army of the Tennessee, and as far down as

New Orleans. They were to be paid, of course, at Illinois and Indiana prices; and the contract figures were pretty good ones. They ran their own steamers up the Arkansas River from landing to landing, and at every tie-up place they found trains of six-mule-team wagons heaped with splendid corn, just what our army needed. How the quartermasters came to be so kind as to land the wagons and teams I can't say, for I could n't prove it; but every ear of that corn was husked by a Union soldier, black or white, on leave of temporary absence, or detailed for special service, at a dollar a day. The contractors got the corn."

"And the boys got the money?"

"They told me they did, cash down, at the end of the day; and they enjoyed the work; and it made them feel like being at home again, you know."

The President leaned back in his chair and laughed merrily, and then he studied hard for a moment.

"That's all about that," he exclaimed. "The government was n't really robbed, after all. I'll see about it. We've more important matters on hand just now. What I want to hear you tell is, how about the reports of cruelty to prisoners of war by any of our

commanders down yonder? Tell me exactly what you found out about that."

"There is n't any truth in those accusations, Mr. Lincoln. Not one word, from first to last."



"EVERY EAR WAS HUSKED BY A UNION SOLDIER."

"As to the guerrillas, I mean."

"Even as to them our generals and post commanders are entirely innocent. They have been exceedingly lenient. There is a

kind of story, there, though. I got it first from some Arkansas people, and then, a little straighter, from a cavalry sergeant while I was riding across from the White River to the Arkansas. He was in command of the escort they gave me. I saw what regiment he belonged to, and I asked him: 'Sergeant, what did you and your boys do with the squad of Sash Watkin's guerrillas that you took week before last? Did you let 'em go, or did they get away?' He looked me in the eye for a moment, and then he laughed and said: 'Colonel, if you was under Steele here, I'd never tell you; but, seein' it's you, I just will. Do you see that neck o' woods away yonder, south? That's where we took 'em. They were the worst kind, you know. Cutthroats, every man of 'em. There was thirteen of 'em.' There he held in, and I asked him again, 'Well, did they get away, or did you let 'em go?' 'Colonel,' he said, 'I did n't reckon you knew about that. Anyhow! So! We had plenty o' rope, and so we let 'em go.'"

"I don't quite get it," interposed Mr. Lincoln. "How is it?"

"The trouble was," I went on, "that these robbers were ruining the country. They were torturing, murdering, burning houses, destroying everything. General Dick Taylor, on the

Confederate side, made a kind of tacit agreement with General Steele that all guerrillas were to be shot on sight, and Taylor's men lived up to it pretty well, to protect their own people. Our boys at first would only bring 'em in and report 'em, and after that they were treated mostly as prisoners of war, or discharged as civilians not liable to be held or exchanged. You see, that sent them back again to their old work worse than ever. Then our boys got their blood up, and they didn't take the trouble to bring in any more guerrillas. The point of it is, Mr. Lincoln, that, if a captured guerrilla was marched out of a camp, and given a start of say fifty yards, and told to run his best, and if good shots began to practise on him at a fifty yards' range, why, then, if they did n't hit him, he got away, and the boys could report it, if they cared to mention it at all. Now, if he was a very bad case indeed, and if he was given a mule to ride home on, and if a rope from a tree overhead had a loop at the end of it that was slip-knotted around his neck, a cut of a whip would start that mule on a run. There was no need then for making any report of that cutthroat. They had let him go."

The President was silent, and his face was darkly cloudy. He even shut his eyes and sat

very still for a moment. Then he picked up a card and wrote something on it.

"Stoddard," he said as he wrote, "go and make your report to Stanton at once, just as you've made it to me. All of those papers [naming them] can be quashed at once, and I'm very glad of it. But Stanton must know right off."

"He's so crowded over there," I said, "I don't know that he'll see me."

"Hand in that," he replied, giving me the card. "He must see you instantly."

There were various matters in my report concerning affairs in the Southwest in which the secretary of war might be supposed to be interested, and I hurried over to the war office. It was in the second story of the old brick building west of the White House. The hallway leading to the rooms occupied by the secretary was almost densely thronged with army officers of all grades, from major-general down, with Senators, Congressmen, and other brilliant civilians also. I once more doubted my chances for seeing the somewhat brusque war minister that day; but Mr. Lincoln's card went in, and I did not have to wait a minute. His own room, with its corps of clerks and aides, had no privacy, and he led me out of it to a little coop of a waiting-room at the end

of the hall, with no furniture in it but a divan sofa before the window. On this we sat down, and he cross-questioned me thoroughly. He seemed as pleased as the President had been at my exonerations of prominent army officers.

He was saying as much emphatically, when one of his clerks came excitedly in, and handed him several wide slips of the thin yellow paper on which telegraphic despatches from the army were generally duplicated. Mr. Stanton took and read, and at once handed a set of the slips to me. "Read that, Mr. Secretary!" he shouted. "Read that! Take it to his Excellency! Fast as you can go! It's the turning-point of the war! Hurrah! No more work in this office to-day!"

Out he dashed into the hall, and he was actually jumping up and down while he roared into that jam of patriotic celebrities the first complete news of Sheridan's great victory in the valley of Virginia, over General Early. Away I went to the Executive Mansion. On the way I met others, to whom I shouted my tidings; but I did not delay a moment in reaching Mr. Lincoln's room, a kind of small procession rushing in with me. The rush grew fast as I handed Mr. Lincoln the despatches and told him not only what was in

them, but also the very remarkable effect they had produced upon the secretary of war.

"I think so, I think so," he remarked as he read; "I guess we'll shut up shop, too. I



"READ THAT!"

don't know that I care to do any more work to-day."

None of the rest of us did, at all events, and the White House, like the war office, obtained almost a half-holiday in which to celebrate Phil Sheridan's famous "turning-point of the war."

THE VOICE OF THE SOUTH



ONCE there came a great and sudden change to all the people of the United States North and South. So great and unexpected a calamity fell upon them that everywhere all men and women stood still and looked into one another's faces, inquiring: "What shall we do now? How shall we go on without Lincoln?"

The most tremendous chapter in the later history of the republic was ended; but the book was not closed, and what might next be written was apparently beyond all human calculation.

Just before this change the days had been full of uproarious rejoicing over the return of peace. It had been thankfully believed that order and prosperity would speedily return, after the long confusion and misery of the Civil War, under the guidance of the strong hand and steady brain which all the world had learned to trust so well.

Lincoln was dead, and with him had passed away the assured and settled policy which he

embodied. The terrible tidings went out over the wires to all corners of the country, and it flashed out under the sea to all the inhabited earth. In all harbors the flags of the ships came down to half-mast, and on the flagstuffs of all forts and camps, while the solemn thunders of the minute-guns sounded the requiem of the murdered President of the United States.

After that there were days of an almost national palsy, and recovery from it hardly came until after the passage from the East to the West of the most remarkable funeral procession that the earth has ever witnessed.

There have been numberless word-pictures of the manner in which the tidings of Abraham Lincoln's assassination were received in many cities and towns of this and other countries, and these assist greatly in obtaining a correct impression of the position which he occupied in the hearts and minds of those who would naturally be expected to honor him.

Somewhat less complete is the general understanding of the effect produced by the sad event upon the people of the vanquished Confederacy and upon some other of our varied national elements as they then existed. It is true, however, that Mr. Lincoln had become wonderfully well understood by the people of

the Southern States, in spite of all that had been said against him.

Our telegraphic system was then not at all what it is now. For instance, there was yet a great break in its lines at the mouth of the Ohio River at Cairo. The wires began again, in one direction, at Duval's Bluff, on the White River, in Arkansas. Between this point and Cairo, and between Duval's Bluff and Memphis, Tenn., a nearer point, all communication was by steamboat. There was therefore a delay of many hours in the arrival of the dread news at the headquarters of the Seventh Army Corps at Little Rock, Ark. The Southwest had been even more bitterly secession in feeling and determination than any of the Middle or Atlantic Southern States. There were yet armed forces in the field, refusing to disband or surrender; and the people generally were outspokenly fierce with all the burning animosity of defeat.

The dawn was barely showing on the morning of the second day after the assassination. The sky was clear, promising one of the warm, bright days of the Southern spring. At a little distance back from the southerly bank of the Arkansas River, and near the middle of the town, stood the old-fashioned, worn-out-looking State House, surrounded by leafless

trees. In one wing of this building, on the lower floor, was the office of the United States marshal. It was also my sleeping-room at the time, and at night contained two narrow camp beds, for my brother was with me, an officer in the Seventh. The sun had not yet risen when I suddenly found myself sitting up in bed and listening.

"Harry!" I exclaimed. "Hark! Do you hear that? It's a heavy gun from one of the forts. What can that mean?"

"The Confederates?" he said. "It can't be that they are attacking. Preposterous."

"Listen! Count! There it comes again. That's a minute-gun! Get up, Harry! Secretary Seward is dead."

The meaning of that was that the illness of the great New York statesman had been reported as possibly fatal, and my brother and I had been brought up as his strong personal admirers. We began at once to recall our pleasant memories of his kindnesses to us, and to sympathize with his family. Hardly, however, were we upon our feet before there came an excited hammering at the door. I went to open it, and an officer thrust in his bare head to exclaim huskily, "Colonel, President Lincoln has been assassinated! Don't you hear the guns? The news just came!"

Away he went, and we stood still for a moment, as if stunned.

"We must put on our black suits, Harry. Only black, from head to foot."

So we did, but the nearest thing to mourning goods that we could muster was our dinner dress suits. We put them on in haste, yet slowly; and then we walked out through the State House grounds to what was then the main street. Hardly had we reached it when we saw a large, portly man coming up the avenue. In one hand he carried a long, heavy, naked bowie-knife; in the other hand a red silk handkerchief, with which he now and then wiped his face.

"Lincoln is dead! Lincoln is dead! D—n!" —for this man was weeping bitterly and swearing, pouring forth angry curses upon the wretch who had slain the good President. He had been a Confederate Army officer, and also a civil court official under the general Confederate government. He did not look at us or speak to us, and we walked on. He was in many respects a representative man, belonging to the educated higher class of the Southwest.

Not many yards beyond him we met a short, gnarled, rugged sort of man who had been a native Arkansas Unionist. He was of unusual intelligence, and had recently been elected to

Congress by one of the Mississippi River districts. He, too, was crying like a child as he walked along, talking to himself about this



"LINCOLN IS DEAD! LINCOLN IS DEAD!"

disaster to the South; and he was all the while swearing fiercely, as one who did not know or care what he was saying. Not a word did he speak to either of us, although he

knew us well ; and we passed on as two men who were dreaming.

Wandering near a line of shanties that were occupied by colored people, we saw a number of men and women, half-clad, hurrying out to fasten rude strips of black stuff at their humble doorways. All of these were mourning loudly, as if they had lost their father.

More and more did it seem like some improbable dream, but only a few minutes later I had to spring forward and restrain some Union soldiers who were dashing furiously along with their knives out, in hot pursuit of a fugitive who was barely rescued from them. "Why, Colonel," they told me, "we ought to kill him ! When he heard of Lincoln's murder, he said it was good enough for him !"

They obeyed me, nevertheless, even while they still angrily asserted that such fellows ought to be shot or hanged. I can now remember distinctly the bewildered, puzzled expression on the war-bronzed faces of those men.

The next squad of soldiers that we saw came running to me with a vociferous complaint.

"Colonel !" they shouted. "Old Bernays is opening his liquor store ! We told him not to !"

I had ordinarily only a doubtful authority in

any such direction, but this was an unusual case.

"Go back!" I replied. "Tell him to shut up at once. The provost marshal's men will close every store in Little Rock as fast as it's opened. Tell him he must n't think of selling any liquor to-day."

With shouts of gratification the brave fellows ran back to deal with the unfeeling conduct of "old Bernays."

Orders from the military authorities went out rapidly, that the peace might be preserved during such a time of excitement, but the next development came as a complete surprise.

Before and even during the Civil War, Little Rock had been a notable headquarters of the Masonic fraternity. They had there a college building of their own. Not only were they numerous and zealous, but they included a large majority of the best citizens of the town and the wealthiest of the neighboring planters.

They were therefore peculiarly an influential and representative body of men. Any action taken by them might without question be regarded as expressing vastly more than merely local thought or feeling.

I had finished my breakfast, and had con-

versed with a number of Union officers at the hotel and at the headquarters of General Reynolds, commanding the department. I had also been at the United States District Courtroom, drafting the necessary memorial, by order of the district judge, to be entered upon the court records. I was coming out of the State House when I was confronted by a committee sent by the "Confederate Masons," as they were sometimes called. Their errand was to inform me that a "lodge of sorrow" was to be held at noon that day at their hall, and that they wished me to come and deliver a funeral address upon Abraham Lincoln. In his death, they sadly declared, they believed the people of the South had received their last and most disastrous blow. They had now lost the one true friend upon whom they had relied for sure protection in the dark future which was opened before them by the result of the war.

There could be no refusal of such a request, and I went with them to a yet more complete surprise. The hall was crowded with sombre-faced men, a large part of whom were ex-Confederate officers and soldiers, not a few, indeed, yet wearing their army uniforms.

Resolutions of respect and of fervid regret were offered, and were adopted unanimously.

Never did I have a more attentive audience or one that was seemingly in more perfect accord with the spirit of what I was saying. That was not all, either. That evening I was again called upon to make a funeral address.

A densely packed assembly of Union soldiers and of the citizens generally of Little Rock gathered in the hall of the House of Representatives in the State House. Not even here, however, could I discern any expression of bereavement more sincere, more heartfelt, than I had seen in the noon gathering at the Masonic Hall. The whole was wonderful, such as might never be forgotten, a sort of flood of uncontrolled and uncontrollable feeling. Nevertheless, not the least striking feature of the mourning for Lincoln was the fact that the first "lodge of sorrow" of any kind, south of the Ohio River, was composed of the most intelligent as well as the most determined of the supporters of the "lost cause" which he had smitten to its death.

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